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AUTHOR McCart, Linda
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ABSTRACT

This volume presents three papers commissioned by the National Governors' Association on children and violence. "Risk Factors for Youth Violence" (Terence P. Thornberry) discusses findings from longitudinal studies conducted over the last decade about children and violent behavior. Nine significant risk factors for violent behavior are identified: chronic parental unemployment; substance abuse; early onset of aggression and antisocial behavior; family characteristics such as poor parenting skills, inconsistent discipline, child abuse, and out-of-home placements; inappropriate peer relationships; victimization; poor school performance; co-occurrence of problem behaviors; and living in socially isolated neighborhoods that fail to meet basic needs. "Dimensions of Youth Violence" (Donna Maria Garnett) presents statistics on youth violence, including the demographics and characteristics of perpetrators and victims of juvenile violence; then expands on the risk factors identified by Thornberry with a special focus on how families and communities can serve as contributing or protective factors for children at risk of violent behavior. "Strategies and Programs for the Prevention of Youth Violence" (David Steinhart) highlights promising interventions for reducing violence among youth. Steinhart reports that the most successful interventions are those that address the multiple and interrelated risk factors associated with youth violence and that reinforce one another across children's everyday social contexts. The document concludes with an annotated list of relevant resources. (NB)

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KIDS — AND VIOLENCE



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Kids and Violence

Edited by Linda McCart

Since their initial meeting in 1908 to discuss interstate water problems, the Governors have worked through the National Governors' Association to deal collectively with issues of public policy and governance. The association's ongoing mission is to support the work of the Governors by providing a bipartisan forum to help shape and implement national policy and to solve state problems.

The members of the National Governors' Association are the Governors of the fifty states, the territories of American Samoa, Guam, and the Virgin Islands, and the commonwealths of the Northern Mariana Islands and Puerto Rico. The association has a nine-member Executive Committee, a Task Force on State Management, and three standing committees—on Economic Development and Commerce, Human Resources, and Natural Resources. Through NGA's committees, the Governors examine and develop policy and address key state and national issues. Special task forces often are created to focus gubernatorial attention on federal legislation or on state-level issues.

The association works closely with the administration and Congress on state-federal policy issues through its offices in the Hall of the States in Washington, D.C. The association serves as a vehicle for sharing knowledge of innovative programs among the states and provides technical assistance and consultant services to Governors on a wide range of management and policy issues.

The Center for Policy Research is the research and development arm of NGA. The center is a vehicle for sharing knowledge about innovative state activities, exploring the impact of federal initiatives on state government, and providing technical assistance to states. The center works in a number of policy fields, including agriculture and rural development, economic development, education, energy and environment, health, information management, social services, trade, training and employment, and transportation. The priorities for the association's research are set by the Governors.

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Introduction

Youth violence is a serious problem in America. It touches the life of every child in this country. Children are either witnesses, victims, or perpetrators. They live in rural towns, suburban communities, and inner cities. Violence invades homes, classrooms, city streets, and community institutions.

Of special concern is the way violence impacts children's early development. Children who are exposed to violence often have difficulty focusing on school work or engaging in other activities that are treasured experiences of childhood. In addition, research suggests that chronic exposure to violence can have serious developmental consequences for children, including psychological disorders, grief and loss reactions, impaired intellectual development and school problems, truncated moral development, pathological adaptation to violence, and identification with the aggressor.

These findings pose serious impediments to the nation's ability to reach the National Education Goals. Children must be safe and secure at home to develop the positive sense of self needed to grow into healthy, productive, caring adults. Children must be safe in their communities to be able to explore and develop relationships with other people. Children must be safe at school in order to learn successfully.

Statistics show that serious crime among youth is growing. In 1991, the latest year for which data are available, youth ages ten to seventeen accounted for 17 percent of all violent crime arrests and, according to law enforcement officials, this figure is rising. This violence also has found its way into the schools. About 3 million thefts and violent crimes occur at or near schools every year. About one in five students in high school regularly carries a knife, club, gun, or other weapon.

Young people are the victims of this violence as well as the perpetrators. Gunshots cause one of every four deaths among teens, and each year nearly a million teenagers between the ages of twelve and nineteen are raped, robbed, or assaulted, often by their peers. Countless other young people are traumatized by the sight of this violence in their everyday lives.

Research indicates that the causes of violence are complex and that solutions require a multidimensional approach. Effective interventions should address the needs of individuals, families, schools, and communities in order to have a significant impact on violent behaviors. These findings suggest that reducing violence among children will require the collective efforts of policymakers at all levels of government, citizens, community institutions, and businesses.

South Carolina Governor Carroll A. Campbell Jr., Chairman of the National Governors' Association (NGA), has included the issue of children and violence as a part of his 1993-94 initiative on integrating programs for children and families. The initiative focuses on coordinating prevention, early intervention, and treatment programs at the community level, with states providing support and technical assistance. In addition, the initiative will seek new ways to organize the intergovernmental responsibilities of federal, state, and local government and to work with individuals, service providers, and advocates to create a more efficient system. An intergovernmental workgroup has been created to address these issues.

To enhance understanding of the complexities of the problem of youth violence and to identify promising strategies for addressing the issue, NGA commissioned three papers—one on the risk factors associated with violent behavior by children, one on the dimensions of the problem, and one on promising national and state strategies to address violence among youth. It is hoped that the papers included in this volume will help inform the debate about children and violence and increase the knowledge base about what can be done.

"Risk Factors for Youth Violence" by Terence P. Thornberry provides clear and concise information about what has been learned from longitudinal studies conducted over the last decade about children and violent behavior. Highlights from the paper include the following.

- There is growing evidence that for many children, involvement in aggression and violence follows a life course trajectory that begins as early as three or four years of age.
- Chronic violent offenders constitute only 5 percent to 15 percent of the population but commit the majority of all violent criminal acts.
- There are nine significant risk factors for violent behavior. They are:
 - chronic parental unemployment;
 - substance abuse;

- early onset of aggression and antisocial behavior;
 - family characteristics such as poor parenting skills, inconsistent discipline, child abuse, and out-of-home placements;
 - inappropriate peer relationships;
 - victimization (i.e., being the victim of violent offenses or witnessing chronic violence in the family and community);
 - poor performance in school and attending schools characterized by limited resources;
 - co-occurrence of problem behaviors such as illegal ownership of guns, drug use, and involvement in gangs; and
 - living in socially isolated neighborhoods that fail to meet the basic needs of their residents, including access to health care, educational opportunities, jobs, housing, and reasonably priced food stores.
- Risk factors are interrelated and their interaction is likely to generate a substantially higher risk for violence. For example, children who are poorly supervised by their parents and who are involved with highly delinquent peers have a much higher likelihood of violence than do children experiencing only one of these risk factors.
 - The presence of multiple protective factors—parental supervision and bonding, commitment to school, reading and math achievement, high expectations from parents and teachers, relationships with peers who maintain conventional values, and self-esteem—can have a sizeable impact on reducing delinquency.

These findings have a number of implications for intervention programs that seek to prevent or reduce violence. The following are general characteristics of successful intervention programs.

- Interventions should begin early. Once violence becomes a part of a child's behavior pattern, it is very hard to eradicate.
- Intervention programs should be comprehensive in order to address the multiple risk factors associated with violent behavior. Programs and services must intervene with individuals, families, schools, and peer factors and change the way these factors interact to produce violent behavior. Interventions also must deal with multiple problem behaviors and should be multilevel, dealing with individual, social, and community factors in a

coordinated fashion. For example, programs that focus on job skills are likely to be ineffective if there is not a coordinated effort to change the social environment so that jobs are available.

- Programs and services should be designed for the long term. They should be available for years, rather than months, to combat the persistent nature of violent behavior.

"Dimensions of Youth Violence" by Donna Maria Garnett presents the statistics on youth violence, including the demographics and characteristics of perpetrators and victims of juvenile violence. The author then expands on the risk factors identified by Thornberry with a special focus on how families and communities can serve as contributing or protective factors for children at risk of violent behavior. Highlights of the paper include the following.

- Although a majority of adults express fear of being a victim of violent crime, youth between the ages of twelve and nineteen are more than twice as likely as adults to become a victim.
- In about half of all cases where youth are victims of violent crime, the perpetrator is someone known to the youth.
- Youth who commit violent acts have an early history of school failure and often experience rejection by their peers during the early grades.
- The capacity of families to serve as a protective factor has been seriously eroded during the past two decades as a result of more single-parent families, more families living in poverty, and more parents in the workforce.
- The capacity of communities to support families also has been diminished. Youth in impoverished neighborhoods are more likely to experience prolonged academic failure and have fewer role models who value education and traditional values.
- Although gangs are viewed as a major contributor to youth violence, the majority of violent acts committed by gangs are against other gang members. The likelihood of a non-gang member becoming the victim of gang violence is about 1 in 4 million.
- Long-term studies of the impact of media violence on children suggest that one of the strongest predictors of how aggressive a young man would be at age nineteen is a preference for violent television programs at age eight.
- In 1991, 78 percent of all murders committed by a juvenile involved the use of a gun.

- The average cost of a crime-related injury is \$41,000 with the annual cost of gun-related injuries estimated at more than \$20 billion.

"Strategies and Programs for the Prevention of Youth Violence" by David Steinhart highlights promising interventions for reducing violence among youth. The author cautions that there has been little hard research on the effectiveness of various interventions and that what is known is based primarily on observations and expert opinion. Like Thornberry and Garnett, Steinhart reports that the most successful interventions are those that address the multiple and interrelated risk factors associated with youth violence and that reinforce one another across children's every day social contexts—family, school, peer groups, media, and community. The interventions highlighted in the paper include strategies to address:

- gun possession by juveniles;
- substance abuse;
- aggressive behavior;
- skill development;
- family dysfunction;
- peer pressure;
- community disintegration; and
- juvenile offender recidivism.

Among the most promising program examples are the following.

New York's Resolving Conflicts Creatively program provides instruction for students and teachers on how to resolve conflict without aggression. Operating in 180 elementary and secondary schools, the program currently serves more than 70,000 children in New York City. The program also includes a peer mediation component with specially trained student mediators. Similar programs are now being implemented in schools throughout the country.

Men of Distinction in Nashville, Tennessee, targets African American males ages nine to seventeen for mentoring. Children are matched with adults from the community who serve as friends and role models. In addition, the program trains high school and college students to provide peer counseling to program participants and sponsors sports events, martial arts training, and dance classes.

Ten states have implemented YouthBuild in an attempt to meet several goals—skill enhancement for high-risk youth, development of leadership skills, creation of affordable housing, and reduction of homelessness. The target population is school dropouts ages sixteen to twenty-one who are at risk of violent behavior. One of the key program components is the decisionmaking power that rests with the participants to hire and fire staff and to make changes in the program as needed.

Los Angeles has experienced some success in discouraging gang membership and reducing gang violence through the Community Youth Gang Services program. Outreach workers intervene directly to mediate gang disputes and are currently focusing on maintaining the peace treaties negotiated among gang members following the Los Angeles riots. Diversion efforts primarily target children ages six and seven. A curriculum for fourth- through sixth-grade students promotes self-esteem. A parent education component helps parents deal with their children's membership in gangs. Finally, a graffiti removal component helps improve neighborhoods while eliminating death threats from rival gang members.

Cleveland, Ohio's Task Force on Violent Crime takes a multidimensional approach to youth violence by focusing on community coalition building, education, and prevention of substance abuse. Young Gentleman's Clubs have been formed in several schools to provide peer support and counseling to at-risk children. A media and public education campaign was successful in getting African American-owned radio stations to stop playing "gangsta rap" music. Neighborhood watch groups have been successful in working with landlords to evict tenants who sell drugs. And, a drug awareness campaign has resulted in an agreement with the National Guard to turn abandoned school yards into playgrounds.

A list of program contacts are provided at the end of the report.

The quotations scattered throughout the publication are from high school students who were asked to write about the difficulties faced by teenagers today. They are taken from a recent study by Mark Singer, associate professor of social work and chair of the doctoral program at the Mandell School of Applied Social Sciences, Case Western Reserve University. In one of the largest studies of its type undertaken to date, researchers are examining the effects of exposure to violence on the mental health of students from inner-city, suburban, and small city high schools in Cleveland, Denver, and northeast Ohio. Funded by the Ohio Department of Mental Health, the Treu-Mart Fund, and the Nord Family Foundation, the

first phase of the study documents the extent to which more than 3,500 adolescents have been exposed to violence, either as witnesses or victims, and the extent to which they have committed violent and predatory acts. The second phase of the study focuses on the degree to which exposure to violence is associated with trauma symptoms such as depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, and anger.

The following are some preliminary findings from this study.

- One in two students attending city schools had witnessed a shooting.
- One in three boys attending city schools had been shot at or shot.
- One in five girls attending city schools had been sexually abused.

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The publication concludes with a selected annotated resource list of the most recent publications on children and violence. The list also includes information about organizations that provide information and technical assistance to states and communities on the subject.

Findings from the papers indicate that states are moving in the right direction. Governors and other policymakers have recognized the critical importance of investing in children. They have taken significant steps to implement educational reforms; to create comprehensive systems of services designed to prevent later problems such as school failure, early unmarried childbearing, and juvenile violence; and to promote and enhance economic growth.

Over the last several years, Governors have tackled the need for systemic reform throughout government. This is reflected in their education reform initiative that began with the 1986 publication of *Time for Results*; their three-year project on early childhood, *Focus on the First Sixty Months*; and their project on school readiness, *Every Child Ready for School*. Governors believe that these efforts will significantly reduce violence among children. They will continue their emphasis on prevention while addressing society's immediate need for strategies to control violent behavior.

Risk Factors for Youth Violence

by Terence P. Thornberry

Introduction

Youth violence is a serious social and criminal justice problem in American society. Indeed, Attorney General Janet Reno has called youth violence "the greatest single crime problem in America today." The prevalence of criminal violence among young people has escalated dramatically over the last half of this century and, by any standard, current rates are unacceptably high. During this same period, however, a great deal has been learned about the risk factors associated with youth violence, its developmental course, and its consequences both to individuals and to society. With that increased knowledge, there is a greater need than ever before to initiate a serious and effective effort aimed at reducing the level of youth violence. The battle will not be easy, nor will there be a simple "cure" for this problem, because youth violence is one of the most persistent forms of problem behavior ever encountered. Nevertheless, given the magnitude and scope of the problem of youth violence in American society, it is imperative that the battle begin.

The Scope of the Problem

This paper focuses primarily on more serious forms of youth violence, such as homicide, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Yet the general conception of youth violence is broad and includes such behaviors as assaults, gang fights, and muggings—behaviors that inflict, or have the realistic potential of inflicting, substantial physical harm on their victims.

While focusing on these extreme forms of violence that emerge during the adolescent and early adult years, it must be recognized that patterns of serious violence take years to develop and have many developmental precursors. Childhood aggression that escalates in seriousness and extends to multiple social settings

often is observed before the onset of more serious forms of criminal violence. Interrupting this developmental stream, therefore, must be considered as one significant way to reduce youth violence.

The Extent of Youth Violence

Compared with other developed countries, America is quite violent. Rates for homicide and other forms of violent crimes are often five to ten times higher than those observed in England, Sweden, Japan, Switzerland, and similar countries. Moreover, based on the uniform crime reports published annually by the FBI, violent crime in America has grown worse, as reflected in Table 1.

Much of this violence is committed by adolescents and young adults; in recent years, the rate of youth violence has increased markedly. Between 1987 and 1991, for example, the

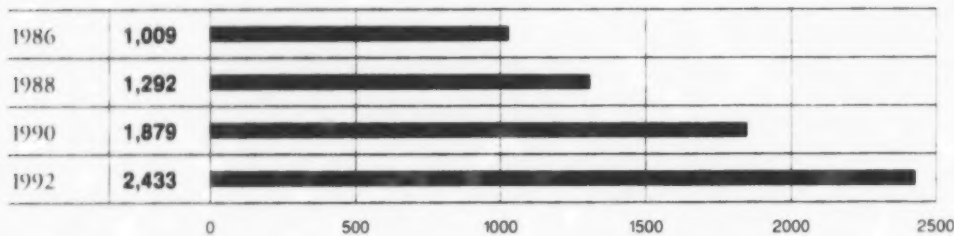
Table 1
Violent Crime in America,
1960 and 1991 (rate per 100,000 people)

<i>Crime</i>	<i>1960</i>	<i>1991</i>
Murder	5.1	9.8
Rape	9.6	42.3
Robbery	60.1	272.7
Aggravated Assault	86.1	433.3

Source: *Crime in the United States—1991, Uniform Crime Reports*, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1992.

Figure 1

Youth Between the Ages of Fifteen and Nineteen Murdered by Firearms, 1986, 1988, 1990, and 1992



Sources: *Crime in the United States—1986, 1988, 1990, 1992, Uniform Crime Reports*, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1987, 1989, 1991, and 1993.

number of juveniles arrested for committing a serious violent crime increased by 50 percent, twice the increase observed for adults. More alarming, juvenile arrests for murder increased by 85 percent, while adult arrests increased by "only" 21 percent. The number of juveniles arrested for a serious violent crime in 1991 was 122,900—the highest number ever recorded.

Violence is not evenly distributed across society. In 1989, African Americans accounted for 42 percent of those arrested for homicide and 50 percent of those arrested for all violent crimes, although they represent only 12 percent of the population. The same disproportion is true among violent youth. In 1991 the arrest rate for violent crimes by African American youth was 1,456 per 100,000, five times higher than the rate for white youth (283 per 100,000).

Youth are not only overrepresented as violent offenders, they also are overrepresented as victims of violent crimes. For Americans between the ages of fifteen and nineteen, homicide by gunfire is the second leading cause of death (see Figure 1). Although youth violence affects all segments of American society, it has particularly devastating effects on people of color. Homicide has long been the leading cause of death among young African American males. In 1987, for example, the death rate due to firearm homicides for African American males ages fifteen to nineteen was 49.2 per 100,000; the rate for white males of the same age was only 5.1 per 100,000.

In addition to the harm that youth violence causes individual victims, its geographic concentration also victimizes communities. Many urban areas are fundamentally unsafe and are increasingly unfit places to live and to raise children. The level of violence in many areas robs the community of its organizational structure, traumatizes the young, and increases the chances that yet another generation of youngsters will be drawn into the cycle of violence.

The direct increase in rates of youth violence has been accompanied by increases in other behaviors associated with violence, or with its increased deadliness. Once again, street gangs have become a serious problem in American cities. They have spread at an alarming rate to smaller and mid-sized American cities. The International Association of Chiefs of Police estimates that there were street gangs in more than 800 cities in 1992, up from 172 in 1980.

In addition, gun ownership has increased substantially. Between 1970 and 1987, the number of handguns in the United States increased by 76 percent and the total number of guns increased by 85 percent. The National School Crime Victimization Survey reported that one in twenty high school students had carried a firearm and one in five had carried a weapon during the past month. Juveniles also are increasingly likely to use these guns in criminal activity. In 1987, guns were used in 64 percent of the homicides committed by juveniles; that percentage increased to 78 percent by 1991.

"As for myself I get scared of dying, dying without no reason! Violence for example if you were walking across the street, some one could just shoot you for nothing, for no reason. I'm really afraid of dying, also getting pregnant. Terrified!"

The litany could go on, but the basic point has been made. Rates of youth violence are unacceptably high and pose a very serious social, public, and mental health problem in this country.

The Development of Violence

During the past quarter century, substantial information about the course of youth violence has been generated by longitudinal studies. Serious violence is typically initiated throughout the later childhood and adolescent years, and the onset of this behavior after age twenty-one or twenty-two is relatively rare. Violence, in general, is a youthful behavior. Throughout the whole life span, violence is highest during the adolescent years.

Although some youth do initiate violence during the later adolescent period, there is growing evidence that for many violent youth, involvement in aggression and violence follows a life course trajectory that begins as early as three or four years of age. Violent acts often emerge in a sequence that starts with less serious oppositional and conduct problems, escalates to physical fights, and culminates in violence. Children who have an early age of onset for these antisocial behaviors are more likely to progress further along the course. Not all children who begin to traverse this developmental path complete it. Knowledge of the factors that determine continuity or discontinuity on this pathway is central to designing effective intervention strategies for this group of at-risk children.

In addition to increasing information about developmental pathways, longitudinal research also has demonstrated that serious violence is strongly concentrated among a small proportion of all youth. Alternately called "chronic violent offenders" or "persistent violent offenders," they constitute a small percentage of the population—estimates range from about 5 percent to 15 percent—but commit the majority of all violent criminal acts—estimates range from 50 percent to 75 percent. Often, these chronic violent offenders have a particularly early age of onset for aggression and violence. They also exhibit little special-

ization in their offending careers, commit a wide range of other criminal offenses, and have additional problem and antisocial behaviors. Because of the significant contribution of this group to the overall rate of violence, successful intervention programs must include strategies to respond to their problem behaviors.

Risk Factors for Violent Behavior

Individual Risk Factors. In addition to describing the course of youth violence, longitudinal studies have identified many risk factors associated with violence. Risk factors can be grouped into the following general categories: socioeconomic status, individual characteristics, precursor behaviors, family characteristics, peers, victimization, educational performance, and co-occurring problem behaviors. Among the more well-accepted risk factors in each of these categories are the following.

Socioeconomic Status

- Socioeconomic inequality
- Underclass status
- Chronic parental unemployment

Individual Characteristics

- Abuse of alcohol
- Abuse of illicit drugs, e.g., cocaine, amphetamines, phencyclidine (PCP), or "crack"
- Central nervous system dysfunction as determined by neuropsychological test deficits

Precursor Behaviors

- Early onset of aggression and antisocial behavior
- Oppositional and conduct disorders
- Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, impulsivity, and other temperamental traits
- Peer rejection

Family Characteristics

- Parental involvement in violence and crime
- Poor attachment to parents

- Poor parental monitoring and supervision
- Harsh, inconsistent, and erratic discipline
- Disruptions in caregiving and multiple out-of-home placements
- Child abuse

Peers

- Associations with delinquent and drug-using peers
- Membership in juvenile street gangs
- Lack of access to prosocial peers
- Rejection by prosocial peers

Victimization

- Being victimized, especially at younger ages, by violent offenses
- Covictimization (i.e., the witnessing of chronic violence in the family and community)

Educational Performance

- Low commitment to and poor success in school
- Lack of attachment to teachers
- Dropping out of school
- Low educational aspirations and goals
- Attending schools characterized by limited resources, disorganized programs and staff, ineffective monitoring and control of students, and low student/teacher morale

Co-occurring Problem Behaviors

- Illegal ownership of firearms
- Routine carrying of firearms
- Drug use, especially use of "harder" drugs such as "crack" cocaine and PCP
- Involvement in gangs or organized crime
- Involvement in drug sales

Community Risk Factors. In addition to these individual risk factors, much research highlights the role communities—especially inner-city, poor communities—may play in

increasing the risk of children committing violence or becoming victims of violent acts. Many of these neighborhoods are socially isolated and fail to meet the basic needs of their residents. Access to safety, health care, educational opportunities, mental health facilities, jobs, housing, and even reasonably priced food stores, is often simply unavailable. The frustration and alienation caused by this level of inequality cannot be ignored in efforts to reduce youth violence.

Relationship of Risk Factors. There is clearly no single pathway or combination of factors that leads to youth violence. Many different psychological and social factors contribute to this outcome. Yet it is clear that these risk factors are interrelated, and their interaction is likely to generate a substantially higher risk for violence. For example, youth who are poorly supervised by their parents and who have highly delinquent peers have a much higher likelihood of violence than do youth who have either one or the other.

It is also clear that exposure to multiple risk factors has a particularly strong influence on behavior. Data from the Rochester Youth Development Study, an ongoing longitudinal study of high-risk youth, illustrate this point. Nine family-based risk factors are identified in the study:

- low parental education;
- unemployed head of household;
- family receiving welfare;
- mother had first child prior to age eighteen;
- high family mobility;
- child experienced out-of-home placement;
- family members experienced trouble with the law;
- family members experienced drug problems; and
- child abuse or maltreatment.

Youth experiencing five or more of these risk factors are considered to be at high risk for engaging in serious, violent delinquency. Compared with the lowest risk group, three

"When I got out of school one time, my friend got shot. I was so scared because anyone could get shot without doing nothing. I mean, for an error. I am a cheerleader, I get out of school at 5 PM. When I am walking home if I see any gang, I go to another side of the street. That's why I'm scared. Anybody could get killed for nothing. It would be better if police officers could come after school to watch the gangs, it would be safer."

**"Well, I think
this world ain't
nothing but a
big ball of anger
ready to explode
and there is
no stopping it.
No stopping it.
No stopping it."**

times as many high-risk youth reported involvement in serious, violent delinquency.

But not all high-risk youth actually engage in violence. Some are buffered or protected and manage to avoid involvement in violent behavior. The Rochester study also identifies thirteen factors that protect high-risk youth from committing violent acts.

- Family Factors
 - Parental supervision
 - Child's attachment to parent
 - Parent's attachment to child
- Educational Factors
 - Reading achievement
 - Mathematics achievement
 - Commitment to school
 - Attachment to teachers
 - Aspirations to go to college
 - Expectations to go to college
 - Parent's expectation for child to go to college
- Peer Factors
 - Peers have conventional values
 - Parent's positive evaluation of peers
- Personal Characteristics
 - Self-esteem

Individually each of these protective factors has a small but significant impact on reducing delinquency. Collectively, however, the presence of multiple protective factors has a sizeable impact on reducing delinquency. Of the high-risk youth who had five or fewer of these protective factors in their environment, 80 percent reported involvement in serious delinquency. Alternatively, of the high-risk youth who had nine or more of these protective factors in their environment, only 25 percent reported involvement in serious delinquency. It is a rather startling statistic in view of the fact that the study examined only high-risk youth who had five or more of the

risk factors listed earlier. Even at this level of risk, 75 percent of them avoided involvement in delinquency if there were multiple protective factors in place.

Although multiple protective factors have a sizeable impact on reducing delinquency, this impact does not appear to be long-lasting. Two or three years after these protective factors were measured, delinquency and violence returned to rather high levels. Thus, protective factors appear to work when they are available but do not appear to have long-term effects.

This finding is consistent with the results of much research evaluating the effectiveness of intervention programs. Intervention research has demonstrated that well-conceived and well-implemented programs can reduce involvement in violence during the course of the intervention. Unfortunately, that same research has demonstrated that postintervention effects are, at best, minimal. The implications of this finding are discussed in the next section.

Implications for Intervention Programs

The results of longitudinal research studies have a number of implications for intervention programs. An intervention program is defined as any deliberate and systematic effort to reduce the trajectory toward violence that develops over the life course. This definition flows from the developmental perspective taken above. It includes efforts to interrupt the developmental pathway early to prevent violence as well as efforts to control the level and seriousness of violence once it becomes a part of the person's behavioral repertoire.

Characteristics of Interventions. Although the discussion of specific intervention programs is beyond the scope of this paper, four general characteristics of intervention programs can be mentioned. Consistent with the results of the longitudinal research, intervention programs should:

- begin early;
- be comprehensive;
- be developmentally appropriate; and
- be made available on a long-term basis.

First, intervention programs should begin early. The evidence is clear that for many violent offenders, especially chronic violent offenders, violence begins at a relatively young age. It also is evident that once violence becomes a part of a person's behavioral repertoire, it is very hard to eradicate. As a result, intervention programs need to begin as early as possible so that developmental trajectories toward violence can be interrupted before they become established. Waiting until the late teenage years—when delinquency and violence are established and co-occurring problem behaviors such as drug use, gang membership, and gun use are evident—is likely to be too late. By that time, intervention programs simply have too much to overcome to be successful. Although programs for older offenders need to be available both to help the youth and to protect society, they are unlikely to have a major impact in reducing violence. Well-designed and well-implemented prevention programs, starting as early as the elementary school years, are far more likely to have a positive impact on behavior.

Second, because of the multiple risk factors associated with violent behavior, intervention programs must be comprehensive. At a minimum, programs must provide services that intervene with individual, family, school, and peer factors and change the way these factors interact to produce violent behaviors. From evaluation research, it is known that monothematic interventions have not worked in the past and there is no reason to expect them to work in the future. Comprehensive programs are the only ones that respond to what is known about the risk and etiological factors associated with youth violence.

In addition to their comprehensiveness with respect to risk and etiologic factors, intervention programs should be prepared to deal with multiple problem behaviors. Chronic violent offenders are apt to be heavily involved in other forms of crime and drug use and in other antisocial and problem behaviors. They also are likely to be victims of crime (e.g., child abuse or youth violence) as well as

covictims, routinely observing violence in the community and in the family. Moreover, it is likely that some of these co-occurring behaviors have an enhancing effect on violence. Intervention programs should be designed so they can simultaneously respond to these related problems and the youth's involvement in violence.

Intervention programs also should be multi-level, dealing with individual, social, and community factors in a coordinated fashion. For example, programs that emphasize job skills are likely to be ineffective if there is not a coordinated effort to change the social environment so that jobs are more likely to be available. Indeed, such programs may be counterproductive because of the frustration they engender as increased expectations are thwarted in an unchanged social environment. This implies that programs designed to intervene in youth violence may be better targeted to communities rather than to individuals or families.

The emphasis on communities as targets of intervention is important for a number of reasons. Programs that focus on individuals or families are likely to provide services to some high-risk youth in violence-prone neighborhoods but ignore other high-risk youth from those same neighborhoods. In light of the tremendous impact that peers and street gangs have on adolescent behavior, this is a serious problem. It is likely that the benefits provided at the individual level will be counteracted at the community level as youth who are not in programs continue to negatively influence those who are. Communitywide programs should miss fewer high-risk youth and be somewhat less susceptible to this problem. Another reason to emphasize communities stems from the multiple and interlocking nature of risk factors for youth violence. Family, school, and peer factors—to name a few—are important risk factors. When they are strengthened in a coordinated fashion, violence is likely to be reduced. For example, when parents and teachers coordinate their efforts to teach and monitor children, when

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"I think the world should just go ahead and end. Because we are dying and suffering day by day. The way things are going now by the future man will self destruct themselves."

**"Violence is a way of life and you can't stop it."
(signed with gang insignia)**

parents know and are involved with their children's peer groups, and when peer groups are involved in school activities and are supervised by teachers, violence is less likely. Community-based programs are better able to establish these linkages than are programs focused on families or individuals.

Third, intervention programs should be built around what longitudinal research has demonstrated about developmental pathways and risk factors. Only interventions that are firmly grounded in theoretical and empirical knowledge about the course and etiology of youth violence should be encouraged. It is particularly important to identify risk factors that are malleable and then to design programs to change them. For example, research has shown that parenting practices such as monitoring, supervision, and use of appropriate discipline can be manipulated and changed in a positive direction. Also, the identification of protective factors that enhance behaviors likely to reduce violence should be central to any intervention. For example, enhancing academic performance and prosocial skills can be accomplished in controlled settings and, when combined with other elements in a more comprehensive intervention plan, may reduce violent behavior.

Studies of the developmental pathways associated with violence also suggest that interventions can and should be developmentally appropriate. For example, the parenting skills appropriate for controlling the behavior of six-year-olds and sixteen-year-olds are vastly different, and the application of age-inappropriate techniques may be counterproductive. Programs need to be as flexible as they are comprehensive.

Finally, programs should be developed and implemented for the long term, encompassing major portions of the life course. For many offenders, violent behavior begins early and is episodically exhibited over many years. It is unlikely that short-term treatments lasting six or twelve months will be effective in combating violence for these offenders. The results of intervention research suggest they are not. A more realistic goal for some individuals involved

in serious violent behavior may be extended supportive and socializing treatment rather than conventional short-term treatment programs. This suggestion is based on the accumulating evidence that serious delinquent behavior, including aggression, may often be part of a significant disabling and durable condition that consists of multiple antisocial and dysfunctional behaviors, often runs in families, and robustly eludes effective short-term treatment. The field has the capacity to construct effective and humane long-term supportive environments for seriously delinquent and violent youth. Such programs need to be explored.

Summary

Youth violence in this country has reached alarmingly high levels and the epidemic shows no sign of abating. To counteract this trend, intervention programs must be designed and implemented in order to interrupt the developmental pathways that eventually lead to serious violence. Waiting to intervene until after serious violence is exhibited is unlikely to be successful in the long run. Programs that attempt to prevent youth violence from developing in the first place are more apt to have a long-term effect.

Moreover, there is growing evidence from longitudinal research that these programs should be developed around four key characteristics.

- Programs should start early in life, before violent behavior patterns are established.
- Programs should be made available for years, rather than months, to combat the persistent nature of violent behavior.
- Programs should be comprehensive to respond to multiple risk factors and multiple co-occurring problem behaviors.
- Programs need to be developmentally specific and be able to change along with the changing needs of children and youth.

Very few, if any, programs with these features have been implemented in the past. The magnitude of the current problem of youth violence indicates that the need is urgent.

Dimensions of Youth Violence

by Donna Maria Garnett

Introduction

Although the subject of youth violence has been steadily gaining attention over the last few years, during the summer of 1993 it became front-page news. In Denver a ten-month-old baby, who was strolling through the zoo with his parents, was shot by a stray bullet. In Atlanta teenage boys tortured a young girl over several days, finally mutilating and murdering her. In the parking lot of a fast-food chain in Milwaukee, a mother was blown away by juvenile thieves while her daughter watched. In Florida tourists have been the target of random carjackings and shootings. No part of the country seems safe from the crazed, senseless violence perpetrated by the nation's young people.

Across the country, political leaders, community activists, child advocates, clergy, parents, and youth themselves are desperately searching

for ways to stop the violence. There are no easy answers. Increasing the number of prison beds has had little, if any, effect as a deterrent to crime. There is a dearth of concrete evidence on what works to prevent violent behaviors, but what little evidence exists suggests that there is no single solution to this seemingly intractable problem. States must take immediate steps to reduce gun possession by minors while continuing their long-term strategies to address the root causes of violent behavior.

The overall status of children and youth worsened steadily through the 1980s. The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) warned in 1990 that America's young people were in severe jeopardy as measured by several critical benchmarks. The benchmarks—all linked to juvenile crime—should have provided an early warning that a crisis of great magnitude was in the making (see *One Day in the Lives of American Children* below).

One Day in the Lives of American Children

According to the Children's Defense Fund, on a given day in 1990:

- 2,756** teenagers became pregnant
- 2,685** babies were born into poverty
- 2** children younger than age 5 were murdered
- 248** children were arrested for violent crimes
- 176** children were arrested for drug abuse
- 427** children were arrested for alcohol abuse or drunk driving
- 10,988** public school students were suspended each school day
- 2,250** students ages sixteen to twenty-four dropped out each school day

Source: Children's Defense Fund, *An Opinion Maker's Guide to Children in Election Year 1992* (Washington, D.C.: Children's Defense Fund, 1991).

"I was raped several times before my 13th birthday. I had a gun pointed at me several times. I've already had 2 nervous breakdowns. My brother beats me and my mother mentally abuses me. I hold in so much rage that if it every came down to it, I could kill someone with no remorse. But I never took any drugs and I don't have a juvinal record."

In fact, many states have undertaken significant policy initiatives to improve the well-being of children, youth, and families. But they have not moved fast enough or with the necessary level of intensity to turn the tide for so many forgotten youth. Martin Luther King Jr. once observed about the turbulence of the sixties that "a riot is the language of the unheard." Perhaps the violence that rivets the attention of a nation is the language of those unheard, disenfranchised youth.

Americans began 1994 cautiously optimistic about the nation's economy. However, a Gannett News Service poll conducted by Louis Harris and Associates December 15-19, 1993, found that people still feel less safe in their own homes and fear being victimized by random crime and violent acts. Nearly 90 percent do not think that crime has decreased in the last year.

Youth themselves perceive an increase in violence and express a sense of hopelessness that characterizes their world. In a July 1993 survey of young people ages ten to nineteen prepared by LH Research, Inc. for the Harvard School of Public Health, 86 percent of the respondents feel that violence is on the rise in city streets, 73 percent feel that violence is up in the schools, and 47 percent feel that violence is on the rise in the home. These young people note that violence has caused serious changes in their lives, but they accommodate their perceptions and adjust their views of their future. Alarming, more than one in three young people believes that their lives will end prematurely as a result of the violence permeating their culture.

In reaction to their fears, Americans are demanding that their elected leaders do something about the problems, ease citizens' peace of mind, and restore public safety. A national survey conducted by the Center for the Study of Youth Policy at the University of Michigan in 1992 found that citizens believe the following statements to be true.

- The main purpose of the juvenile court should be to rehabilitate young law violators.

- Juveniles should receive the same due process protection as adults.
- Juveniles who commit serious crimes should be tried in adult courts.
- Juveniles should not receive the same sentences as adults, and most juveniles should not be sentenced to adult prisons.
- A youth correction system should emphasize the use of community-based treatment programs, and state funds for juvenile crime control should be spent on these types of programs rather than on training schools and residential facilities.
- Training schools and residential facilities have little effect in rehabilitating delinquents or in acting as a deterrent to further juvenile crime.
- Juveniles who commit serious violent crimes should be committed to some type of youth correctional facility.
- Juveniles found guilty of using drugs or selling small amounts of drugs should receive more lenient sentences than do those convicted of selling large amounts of drugs.
- Juveniles who are repeat offenders should receive harsher sentences than first-time offenders.

Are the opinions and perceptions of adults and youth an accurate portrayal of the realities of violent crimes being committed, or are those concerns inflated by the daily accounting through the nation's media?

Demographics on Youth Crime

The United States is more violent than other industrialized countries. However, the recent International Crime Survey reveals that, at a national level, the risks of many crimes—car theft, burglary, robbery, and assault—were not especially greater than in other countries, and frequently were below them. Yet the annual murder rate in America is considerably higher than that of any other industrialized country, with research suggesting that the higher rate of homicide may be more of a reflection of gun ownership than a difference in underlying aggressive behavior.

America's young males are significantly more at risk of being murdered than are young men in other countries. As indicated in Figure 2, twenty-one young American males per 100,000 between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four are murdered each year, which is more than seven times the rate in Canada and is substantially higher than the rate in other developed countries.

Released in October 1993, the FBI uniform crime reports for 1992 indicated that in that year a violent crime was committed every twenty-two seconds. Violent crime is defined as murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Figure 3 tells the chilling story.

Total arrests for crime in all age groups increased 20.3 percent during the nine years from 1983 to 1992, with the major increase occurring in the category of arrests for violent crime (50.8 percent). During the same time-frame, arrests of juveniles for violent crimes rose by 57.1 percent (see Table 2). It is interesting to note that over the same nine years, arrests for crimes committed against family members and children increased 83 percent.

The 1993 *Kids Count Data Book* reports that the juvenile violent crime arrest rate for ten-to-seventeen-year-olds increased in forty-four states and the District of Columbia in the five years from 1986 to 1991. The rate more

than doubled in nine states: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Washington, and Wisconsin.

Table 3 indicates the twelve jurisdictions with the highest rate of juvenile arrests for violent crime (i.e., homicide, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault).

Large urban areas have long been touted as the centers for violent, juvenile crime. Law enforcement officials have most often linked these serious crimes with drugs and gang influences. The spread of these influences to other less populous areas of the country have certainly precipitated increases in juvenile crime. What was once thought to be a problem of the largest metropolitan areas has become a problem in every U.S. city, suburb, and rural community.

Characteristics of the Perpetrators of Youth Violence

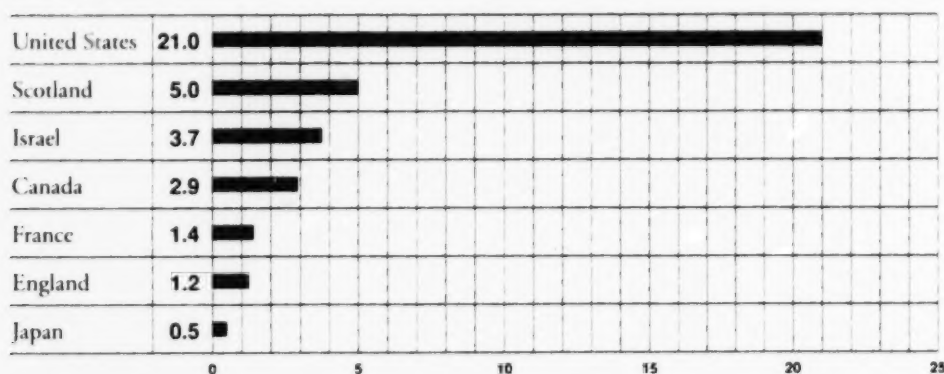
Evidence taken from a wide variety of sources, ranging from the field of criminal justice to studies of child and adolescent behavior, shows that chronic violent juvenile offenders have several common characteristics. These young people, most often boys:

- started their criminal careers before the age of twelve;

Figure 2

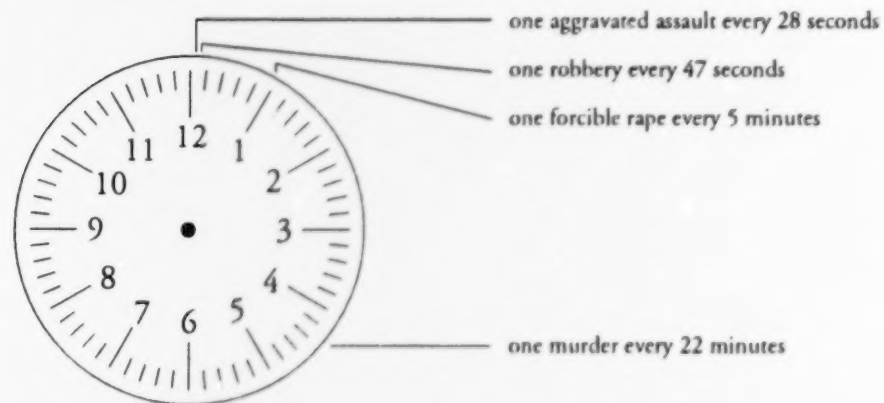
Annual Murders of Young Men Between the Ages of Fifteen and Twenty-Four

(rate per 100,000)



Source: Deborah Prothrow-Stith, *Deadly Consequences* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991).

Figure 3
FBI Crime Clock



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Source: *Crime in the United States—1992, Uniform Crime Reports*, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1993.

Table 2
Arrests of Youth Below Age Eighteen for Violent Crimes, 1983 and 1992

<i>Offense Charged</i>	<i>1983</i>	<i>1992</i>	<i>Percent Change</i>
Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	1,175	2,680	128.1
Aggravated assault	29,917	58,383	95.1
Forcible rape	3,914	4,882	24.7
Robbery	31,290	38,192	22.1
Total	66,296	104,137	57.1

Source: *Crime in the United States—1992, Uniform Crime Reports*, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1993.

- lack consistent discipline by their families and are less attached to their parents;
- lack male role models in their lives;
- have experienced academic failure since the elementary grades and have little commitment to school or attachment to teachers; and
- reside in high-density, poor neighborhoods with high crime rates and have peers that are engaged in delinquent behaviors.

Although the general populace and policy-makers express concerns about the increase in violent youth crime, it should be emphasized that the evidence does not point to a significant increase in the percentage of youth engaging in violent acts. On the contrary, the greatest percentage of violent youth crimes is being committed by a relatively small cohort of youth. The vast majority of violent crimes are being committed by 2 percent to 15 percent of the male juvenile population. Most young people, even those subject to multiple risk factors, grow up to become law-abiding and productive citizens.

Table 3

Juvenile Arrests for Violent Crime

<i>Jurisdiction</i>	<i>Arrests per 100,000</i>
District of Columbia	1,448
New York	980
Florida	795
New Jersey	753
California	645
Maryland	627
Missouri	567
Rhode Island	566
Massachusetts	540
Delaware	529
Colorado	529
Arizona	516

Source: Center for the Study of Social Policy, *Kids Count Data Book* (Washington, D.C.: Center for the Study of Social Policy, 1993).

Characteristics of the Victims of Youth Violence

In a national public opinion poll conducted on attitudes toward juvenile crime and juvenile justice, 78 percent of surveyed adults expressed that they were "somewhat concerned" to "very concerned" about becoming the victim of a serious crime. In reality youth between the ages of twelve and nineteen are more than twice as likely as adults to become victims of violent crime.

The increase in the murder rate of youth above age thirteen is most alarming, nearly tripling from four per 100,000 to eleven per 100,000 between 1984 and 1991. Youth homicide victims are most likely to be male, and the rate of murders of black youth is five to six times the rate for white youth. Most young murder victims are being killed with guns—83 percent of murdered fifteen- to nineteen-year-olds in 1993.

About half the time, the young victim of a violent crime is victimized by someone known to the youth—16 percent by family members and 33 percent by friends or acquaintances. Nine times out of ten, violent crimes are committed against a youth by another youth of the same racial background. Not surprisingly, the victims resemble their perpetrators.

Predictors of Criminal Behavior

Across the country, everyone is searching for a cure to the "epidemic" of youth violence. Families of victims, the media, and experts in crime and human behavior are asking whether there are signs that would indicate that an adolescent is headed down a path that may lead to a senseless act of violence. In fact, years of research do reveal that certain common characteristics and patterns of development are observable in adult habitual violent offenders and in youth who commit violent crimes. Violent offenders tend to get an early start in their life of crime. By the time a juvenile is arrested for the third time, he is virtually guaranteed to continue a life of crime.

Long-term research reveals other factors that predict the potential for later violent behaviors. For example, the violent offender often exhibits

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**"I'm always
getting shot at
and it sucks."**

"Being a black male with a 3.6 GPA, I'm often talked about because I don't party alot, or drink, or smoke, I mostly stay in the books. because of my determination in school; many people choose not to have much to do with me. There are many other black males in my school who are just as smart as I am, but care more about drinking, and drugs and gangs so they can be 'cool' and have 'hard' friends. I feel more students would succeed in school if they didn't feel so much pressure from their friends to stay away from school."

signs of hyperactivity and attention deficit. These individuals have a history of acting on impulse and of being restless. They have an inability to concentrate and a poor ability to delay gratification. Frequently, they show low empathy for others and have a low IQ.

Other characteristics violent offenders have in common are excessive viewing of violence on television and bullying of others in the early school years. As children, they have had harsh but erratic discipline, have most likely been the victims of abuse and neglect, and lack parental nurturance. They are apt to live in large families with low income, and criminal behavior by family members is common. School failure has been evident from the earliest grades, and these young people have been rejected by more normal peers from early on. Crime and poverty are all around them as they are likely to live in substandard housing in high-density neighborhoods where many men are unemployed.

Are these elements the causes of youth violence? Certainly not every young person experiencing several of these risk factors goes on to become a violent criminal. On the contrary, most do not. And, not every violent offender manifests these risk factors. What differentiates those who rise above the risk factors from those who succumb to a life of violent crime?

Causes of Youth Violence

Experts in the area of youth violence tend to group causal factors into two categories: those caused by sociological influences and those caused by physiological influences. From the sociological perspective, violent behavior is a learned response to frustration. Violence may be used as an avenue for getting what one wants or for exerting control in otherwise uncontrollable circumstances. Aggressive behaviors are learned and reinforced at an early age from family, peers, and others in the community, and through the mass media.

Researchers have tracked the progression of antisocial behaviors—behaviors that precede the commission of a violent crime. In most cases, the perpetrator of a violent crime expe-

rienced a number of problems even in the first six years of life. As young children, these youth displayed unacceptable behaviors. They were the products of either overly harsh discipline or relatively little discipline at all.

In middle childhood, while the child is still in elementary school, aggressive behavior exhibited by the child lead to rejection by "normal" peers and are usually accompanied by academic failure. These conditions, coupled with the natural desire of children to be accepted and validated, push the child toward more deviant peer groups. During late childhood and adolescence, the youth's involvement in delinquent acts escalates and he becomes a "walking time bomb."

The physiological view maintains that individuals have a predisposition toward aggressive behavior and that certain events can trigger a violent response. Chemicals in the brain, such as drugs and alcohol, can act as these triggers. Alcohol is the chemical most associated with aggression, though PCP, ICE (metaphetamines), and cocaine are strongly associated with violent displays of aggression. Some studies have found that allergic reactions, lead poisoning, and even high levels of the male hormone testosterone are linked to aggressive behaviors.

Traumatic events such as head injuries can bring on violent behaviors. The high incidence of head trauma among many violent juvenile offenders gives credence to this theory. These youth frequently were beaten or otherwise abused in childhood.

In reality, the probability is high that both sociological and physiological factors contribute to violent behavior. The cumulative effects of multiple negative factors in the absence of significant protective factors probably have an impact on which kids make it and which ones do not.

Risk Factors Related to Youth Violence

A youth for whom these factors and patterns are present is possibly more at risk of committing a violent crime than is a youth for whom these factors and patterns are not present. Yet the assumption cannot be made that the

presence of these factors and patterns causes violent behaviors. Clearly, the fact that the majority of young people who are at risk do not go on to commit violent crimes is evidence that these are not cause and effect relationships. The policy challenge is to ascertain what conditions intervene and what measures can be taken to prevent an at-risk youth from becoming another statistic in the FBI uniform crime reports.

The following factors are evident in the lives of most juveniles who commit violent crimes. These factors can be instructive to policymakers in determining where to target limited resources to prevent juvenile violence.

Families

Families play a critical role in violence. Historically, families are the basic unit of society, carrying out an array of functions that are necessary to the well-being of communities. Families provide for the basic needs of their members—food, clothing, shelter, and health care. The family serves as a bridge between the individual and society, passing on the rules and values of the community and beginning the process of education. Families provide both adult and child members with a sense of continuity, belonging, and a hope for the future. A family is the most efficient and effective environment for rearing children, meeting the needs of individual family members, and providing care for the family unit as a whole.

Yet families can only carry out their critical functions effectively when they have the personal skills, knowledge, abilities, and resources to do so, as well as the kinship and friendship networks to support them emotionally. The family's capacity to function productively is also impacted by the availability of resources within the local community. Policies established at the local, state, and federal levels influence the availability of those resources.

During the past two decades, the capacity of families to provide the type of environment that serves to protect young people has seriously eroded. The median income for families has continued to drop—32 percent between 1973 and 1990—and today it takes two

incomes to buy what one income bought only a few years ago. Frequently, in two-parent families, both parents must work. In single-parent families, the parent often must hold down two or more jobs just to provide for the basics. At the beginning of the 1990s, more than 20 percent of America's children were living in poverty. Almost half of all African American children were poor, as were 38 percent of all Hispanic children.

Living in poverty is the strongest predictor of juvenile violence. Inadequate income translates into housing options that usually are limited to high-density, crime-ridden neighborhoods. The lack of opportunities for participation in experiences associated with school success results in poor children starting their education at a deficit—a gap that grows wider each year. Adolescents living in low-income conditions are more likely to engage in delinquent behaviors, to be arrested, to have early sexual intercourse, and to drop out of school.

The past twenty years have also seen a dramatic change in the structure of families. The number of single-parent, female-headed households has increased dramatically. This fact has contributed significantly to the increased number of children living in poverty. Growing up in a single-parent household is a factor common in most violent youth, but it should not be construed to be causal. Research repeatedly points to the fact that the single-parent family is probably living in poverty and poverty is the relevant feature.

Increased domestic violence and child abuse and neglect are other indicators that families are stressed and that their capacity to carry out critical functions on behalf of their adult and child members is jeopardized. Virtually all juveniles who commit violent crimes have themselves been the victims of violence and have seen violence inflicted upon family members and friends. Deborah Prothrow-Smith, M.D., former Massachusetts Commissioner of Public Health, writes in her 1991 book *Deadly Consequences*:

"Most teenagers have to deal with the fact that it not safe any more, and that you must be part of a gang and order to stay alive, education is a way out but if had a disability in learning, and no money for college the only way out selling drugs and rob people. Rich kid think they have a problem, but they don't know the probles face by lower class people, and that it is life threatening."

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"My major concern is that the black race is slowly but surely being driven into extinction. Help us!!"

The destructive lessons parents teach when they are physically and psychologically abusive to their children and when they allow their children to be physically and psychologically abusive to others, in conjunction with our society's glorification of violence, the ready availability of guns, and the drug culture are an explosive combination that set our children up to be the perpetrators and the victims of violence.

Violence begins at home.

Neighborhoods

Second only to the critical role played by families is that played by neighborhoods or communities. Neighborhoods provide the social and interactive settings where families carry out those critical functions of caring for and socializing their offspring. In the ideal world, neighborhoods and communities enhance the family's capacity to function and provide a sense of affiliation and identification. They provide a place to practice social interaction, imbue formal and informal education, provide human services, and prepare for and engage in employment.

Over the last twenty years, the trends for neighborhood well-being have mirrored those trends for children, youth, and families. As more families have slipped into poverty and deteriorated on other important benchmarks, so have neighborhoods. The nineties have seen dramatic increases in the number of poverty-stricken neighborhoods. These neighborhoods are likely to have:

- areas that are racially and ethnically segregated;
- working-age males who are unemployed;
- many youth who have dropped out of school;
- households that are headed by single women;
- households that are dependent on public assistance;
- housing that is substandard and crowded;
- drug markets that are highly visible, lucrative, and violent;
- schools and other social institutions that are in disarray; and
- high levels of crime.

Poverty in neighborhoods is again the strongest predictor of youth violence—stronger than race and stronger than single-parent household status. Youth in poor neighborhoods are at severe risk on all the indicators associated with youth violence. These youth are more apt to have experienced prolonged academic failure and have fewer role models demonstrating the commitment to and value of an education. Adolescents are more likely to be engaging in sexual activity, and young women are more likely to be teen parents.

Not every young person living in a poverty-stricken neighborhood turns to a life of crime or becomes welfare-dependent. Like their counterparts in more privileged areas, some of these youth have strong parents who provide consistently firm but nurturing guidance, adult role models to look up to, and exposure to enriching opportunities. These protective factors help them beat the odds. But can they beat the odds of becoming a victim?

Gangs

Inherently, membership in a gang is not bad. It is the natural tendency for adolescents to band together, to form affiliations, to seek validation of their actions, and to enhance their self-esteem. It is when gang members become involved in the commission of crime and violence that those affiliations become problematic. As with other factors related to youth violence, poverty plays the major role in gang membership. Youth living in poor neighborhoods are those most likely to be involved in a gang.

Gangs have proliferated over the past twenty-five years and have spread to smaller cities where previously there was no gang problem. Gang affiliation has typically included higher male involvement than female, but there is evidence to suggest that female involvement is increasing. Gangs provide an avenue for a young person to attain the symbolic wealth promoted by the media. Unfortunately, the easy access to guns, cars, and drugs may have deadly consequences.

Of the 22,540 murders reported in 1992, 804, or less than 4 percent, were juvenile gang killings. However, almost 80 percent of these gang killings were committed with a handgun. Figure 4 reflects the increase in juvenile gang killings.

Although media coverage would suggest that gangs are responsible for mass, random acts of violence perpetrated on innocent bystanders, these occurrences are relatively rare. The violent acts committed by these youth are most often visited upon their counterparts in rival gangs or on members of their own gang. The likelihood that a nongang member will become a random victim of gang violence is slim.

Unfortunately, the overdramatization of gang violence is having a dramatic political effect on the voting public. Out of fear for their own safety and that of their children, members of the electorate are getting tougher in their views about how juvenile offenders should be treated under the criminal justice system.

Entertainment

America is a nation that reveres and glorifies violence. Violence disguised as entertainment is a multibillion dollar enterprise. Television violence is often viewed as the major culprit in this arena. The typical eight-year-old is likely to watch twenty-eight hours of television each week and to witness hundreds of violent acts

in that time. Lacking the resources and opportunity to participate in enriching experiences, children living in poverty are likely to watch even more hours of television.

But television is not the only culprit. American children are inundated with violence through all forms of entertainment. The film industry banks on the popularity of its "action movies," the music industry sells heavy metal and rap music that promotes violence, and video games readily available to even the youngest consumers pit young heroes against the most vile opponents in a "kill or be killed" competition.

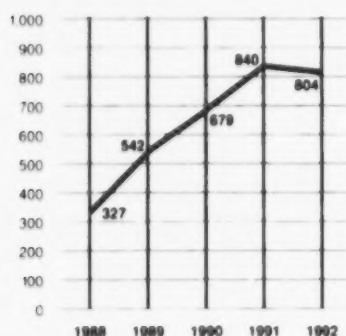
Long-term studies looking at aggression in school children, which have followed the subjects for more than thirty years, shed some light on the influence of violence on television. In this research, which followed hundreds of young people from the age of eight into adulthood, aggression has been shown to be a trait that is established early and that remains stable over time. The strongest predictor of how aggressive a young man would be at age nineteen was a preference for violent television programs at the age of eight.

Guns

Keeping guns out of the hands of young people has become a priority issue in virtually every state in the last few months. Guns were associated with the vast majority of violent crimes committed by people of all ages in 1992—seven out of ten murders. For every one person killed with a gun, five more are injured; 40 percent of all robberies involved a gun. In 1991, 78 percent of the murders committed by a juvenile involved the use of a gun. Between 1983 and 1992, arrests of youth below age eighteen for carrying or possessing a weapon increased by 117 percent.

Recent gun control laws and mandatory sentencing for youth caught carrying a gun are becoming increasingly popular with the public; 89 percent of adults and 76 percent of youth favor gun control measures. Yet these measures may create a false sense of security for people. Youth report that they acquire guns through many sources, almost none of them through the legal purchase of a gun.

Figure 4
Juvenile Gang Killings, 1988-1992



Source: *Crime in the United States—1992, Uniform Crime Reports*, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1993.

"Haveing to deal with other violent people and nowing that your never safe. The guns, gangs and drugs are too much for teenagers to handle, we need more HELP!!"

"They have to deal with the violence on the streets and drugs every time they leave the house. They always wonder will they live another twenty-four hours because it is very rough these days and we should be sticking together instead of killing each other. If you're down with a gang it's okay because if you're about to get jumped your gang can help you. anyway, I'm in a gang and its called 8-Ball Hustlers."

In a survey of juveniles released in December 1993, when asked how many owned a gun, one out of five male students indicated he had a gun in his possession. When asked how easy it would be for them to get a gun, only 35 percent of the high school youth responded that they thought it would be a lot of trouble or impossible to get one. Nearly four out of ten youth said they could get a gun "off the street."

It is important to understand the reasons why young males, in particular, possess guns. These young males report that they carry guns in order to protect themselves from possible attacks from others and to show off and impress their friends.

Policy Implications

The policy implications of youth violence are significant. The costs associated with youth violence are astronomical. The average cost of a crime-related injury according to a report in a January 1994 issue of *Health Affairs* is \$41,000. That report estimates that the nation's costs for gunshot-related injuries exceed \$20 billion a year. This estimate takes into account actual medical bills, lost productivity, and psychological impacts.

The average cost of incarcerating one young violent offender is more than \$38,000 per year. This estimate does not account for the human suffering associated with losing a child to violence, either as a result of violent acts or to the culture of violence.

The proposed national crime bill will put billions of dollars into community policing programs, jail construction, boot camps, and regional prisons. Substantially fewer resources are earmarked for the prevention of crime, violence, and drug and alcohol abuse. Juvenile justice experts and child advocates fear that the focus on retribution against juvenile offenders diverts resources from the root causes of juvenile violent crime. Public officials are faced with the dilemma of responding to both the public outcry for immediate action and the need for sustained efforts to prevent the problems that precede youth violence.

Given the dimensions of youth violence, one thing seems clear. There is no single response or cure for the epidemic of violence that is sweeping the United States. A multifaceted approach is needed—one that punishes crime quickly and consistently and one that intervenes in the root causes of violence early and in a sustained manner. There is general agreement among criminal justice experts, judges, child advocates, and academicians that the following steps must be taken to address the issue of youth violence.

- Strengthen the family's capacity to care for and instill values in the child.
- Support core institutions—schools, churches, and community-based organizations—in their efforts to develop law-abiding, productive, self-sufficient citizens.
- Prevent delinquent behaviors from happening by intervening early in the root causes associated with youth violence.
- Communicate to the minority of violent and habitual offenders that their crimes will not be tolerated.

Public policy must take into account the long view as well as the short-term solutions to violent youth crime. The challenge to policymakers is to allocate resources in a thoughtful manner to ensure that both goals are met.

Strategies and Programs for the Prevention of Youth Violence

by David Steinhart

Youth Violence as a Major National Problem

Violent juvenile crime has been increasing throughout the United States. According to the FBI, juvenile arrests for violent crimes rose 57 percent nationally between 1983 and 1992. Juvenile homicide arrests climbed even more steeply in this period—up 128 percent. Both the rate (per 100,000 juveniles in the population) and the number of arrests increased sharply during these nine years. Early returns for 1993 suggest a slight downward trend in the rate of violent juvenile arrests, but additional reporting years are needed to determine whether the ten-year trend of youth violence in America has started to abate.

Children are the victims as well as the perpetrators of violence. In 1992 nearly 4,000 persons from infancy to nineteen years of age were murdered in the United States. For some demographic groups, such as African American males ages fifteen to twenty-four, homicide has become the leading cause of death.

The increase in juvenile violence has aroused public fear and indignation. Many states have responded with harsher sanctions for violent juvenile crime, pushing more teenagers out of the juvenile justice system into adult courts and prisons. Florida, for example, tried more than 7,000 minors in adult criminal courts in fiscal 1992-93 and committed 1,135 of these young people to state prisons.

This paper is an overview of strategies and programs for the prevention of youth violence that are being implemented in the United States. It covers a range of approaches—regulatory and programmatic—in what must be described as a new prevention frontier. The coverage is necessarily limited to basic strategies and to selected examples of programs that are being tried at federal, state, and communi-

ty locations. No attempt is made to endorse particular programs or approaches.

The Search for Effective Strategies and Programs

As a science, violence prevention is in its infancy; many of the programs and strategies in use have not been carefully evaluated and their effectiveness in reducing violence cannot be demonstrated with accuracy. Efficacy is an important concern of policymakers and budget analysts who want to know that investments of public funds will produce hard results by reducing violent crime. The best information often comes from outcome studies that track individual performance over a period of years; thus, evaluation itself can be expensive and time consuming. Randomized field testing, which yields evaluation results at the highest level of confidence, is even more costly and may be barred by policy concerns about equal protection or access to treatment for those assigned to control groups.

Despite these obstacles, strong evaluation components are increasingly stated as requirements of government-funded crime prevention programs. Some federal agencies, such as the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), are now funding multiyear research projects with evaluation objectives designed to test the effectiveness of specific violence prevention strategies. In the meantime, officials making funding commitments for violence prevention must rely primarily on expert opinion and on whatever limited outcome data may be available.

Strategies and Programs for the Prevention and Control of Youth Violence

Research suggests that violence among youth is a complex issue. It stems from multiple risk factors, such as child abuse, substance abuse, school failure, low self-esteem, and broad social factors, including cultural acceptance of

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"Teenagers have to deal with pregnancies, drugs, alcohol, and gangs. I'm in a gang. I've been in it since I was 13 years old. I joined in Chicago. Now I want to get out cause I'm scared. But I'll be alright once I get out of it. Some kinds aren't so lucky. They have no choice but to stay in or get beaten up bad."

violence and exposure to violence in the media. These multiple risk factors demand multiple prevention and intervention strategies that reinforce one another across the child's everyday social contexts—family, school, peer group, media, and community.

Described below are federal, state, and local strategies and programs for the prevention and control of youth violence. A concluding section briefly examines the roles of states in comprehensive violence prevention planning.

Firearms and Youth Violence

Guns are more than a symbol of America's violent society. They are the lethal agent of destruction for a growing number of America's children. Approximately 5,000 children and teenagers (age nineteen and below) die of gunshot wounds each year in the United States as victims of murder, suicide, or accidents involving guns. This is an average of fourteen child gunshot deaths each day. Handguns, rather than rifles or long guns, are directly responsible for the vast majority of these deaths.

Much of the media coverage is focused on children as carriers and users of guns. Several recent surveys among youth reveal an alarming number who own guns and carry handguns to school, supposedly for self-protection. In 1991 the U.S. Department of Justice sponsored a survey of 1,600 male high school students and incarcerated juveniles in California, Illinois, Louisiana, and New Jersey. Among the juvenile inmates, 83 percent admitted owning guns when they were arrested, and among the high school students, 22 percent said they currently owned a gun. Most survey respondents reported that guns were relatively easy to obtain through friends or street contacts and that handguns usually could be purchased "on the street" for less than \$100.

Federal and State Regulation of Handgun Possession by Minors. The main focus of federal and state action has been regulation of gun sales to minors and of gun possession by minors. In the Gun Control Act of 1968, Congress prohibited the sale or delivery of handguns by dealers, manufacturers, or collectors to people below age twenty-one. In 1994 President Bill

Clinton is expected to sign legislation making handgun possession by minors (i.e., those below age eighteen) a federal crime. Traditionally, regulation of handgun possession has been a matter of state action. By the end of 1993, sixteen states had laws barring the open carrying or possession of handguns by people below age eighteen. Another thirteen states and the District of Columbia had laws prohibiting or regulating the carrying or possession of handguns by people below age twenty-one; some of these states prohibit the open carrying of handguns by people of all ages. Twenty-one states permit the open carrying of handguns by minors (see Figure 5).

Colorado took action in late 1993 to join those states prohibiting handgun possession by minors. After a deadly string of shootings by juveniles, Colorado Governor Roy Romer called a special session of the legislature to consider a fourteen-point violence prevention plan. His proposals: balanced tough sanctions for serious juvenile crimes with prevention and community intervention strategies, including job and skill development programs for high-risk youth. The main result of the special session was a new Colorado law banning handgun possession by people below age eighteen, with limited exceptions for guns used for hunting and firearms instruction. Violation of this law is a misdemeanor, with a minimum punishment of five days of incarceration on a first offense; subsequent offenses are a felony and are subject to possible waiver to adult court. The detention provisions of the new law already have been challenged in the Colorado courts.

Will government regulation restricting access to guns stop the violence in the streets? Studies tracking the effectiveness of gun control measures on the levels and rates of violent crime produce no clear and convincing results. For example, the 1977 District of Columbia law broadly prohibiting handgun ownership was credited for reducing gun robberies and homicides after its passage, but these effects appeared to be overwhelmed when crack-related gun crimes surged there in 1988. On the other hand, an evaluation of mandatory

sentences for felonies committed with firearms in Florida, Michigan, and Pennsylvania showed reduced homicide rates in the six cities under study. The National Research Council states that more research is needed on three high-priority firearm violence control strategies: disrupting illegal gun markets, enforcing bans on juvenile possession of handguns, and improving community policing efforts to reduce firearm use.

In the meantime, gun control advocates are demanding immediate state and federal action to limit access to firearms, with an emphasis on controlling the commerce through which the weapons are made available. Their proposals include the following.

- State laws mandating waiting periods longer than the five days imposed by Congress through the Brady law and background checks for handgun purchasers.

- Outright bans on the manufacture, sale, and possession of listed types of assault weapons, handguns, or bullets.
- New taxes on firearms and higher fees for federal firearm licenses.
- A larger state role in the public education effort to discourage the acquisition and use of guns, especially by children.

Education to Keep Guns Away From Children.

Florida's Dade County Gun Safety Awareness Program is a community education program that teaches children the dangers associated with guns. It is cosponsored by Dade County public schools, the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence, and Youth Crime Watch of Dade County. The program includes a school curriculum known as "Kids + Guns = A Deadly Equation," with classroom instruction and a video presentation for children and parents.

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Figure 5
State Juvenile Gun Control Laws, 1993



Sources: Center to Prevent Handgun Violence, *Kids Carrying Guns* (Washington, D.C.: Center to Prevent Handgun Violence, 1993); and unpublished data.

Children are taught to recognize dangerous situations and to resist peer pressure to acquire or play with guns. The curriculum includes material on violence in the media.

Substance Abuse and Youth Violence

Youth violence prevention experts differ on the priority that should be given to substance abuse prevention strategies in the quest to reduce youth violence. A key question is whether the substances are themselves, by pharmacological action, to blame for violent outcomes, or whether other and stronger factors such as social conditioning are primarily responsible. In its analysis of the connection, the National Research Council concludes that psychological, social, and cultural factors contribute strongly to violent events that are associated with drug or alcohol use. This conclusion underscores the need to invest in violence prevention strategies that address multiple risk factors.

There are some key differences in the types of violence, and thus in relevant control strategies, associated with illicit drugs and alcohol. Much of the violence associated with illicit drugs is due to the economics of the trade, for example, dealer-on-dealer assaults. Alcohol consumption is more often associated with interpersonal aggression. Several studies support the assertion that drinking precedes half or more of the violent events, including domestic violence, occurring in the United States. Moreover, alcohol is distinguished from most drug use in America because alcohol is legal for adults and is relatively easy for teenagers to obtain.

Most state and federal action on teen drinking is focused on the highway safety issue, with sale, possession, and motor vehicle laws designed to keep young drinkers off the road. All fifty states now set age twenty-one as the minimum drinking age. To further restrict youth access and use, states have employed the following strategies.

Zero Tolerance Laws for Youth. Eighteen states—Arizona, Arkansas, California, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North

Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, and Wisconsin—and the District of Columbia have adopted laws reducing the acceptable blood-alcohol limit for drivers below age twenty-one or age eighteen to .04 or less.

Server Liability Laws and Server Education. All states have laws imposing some measure of liability for sellers or servers of alcohol to underage patrons. Oregon, which has taken a comprehensive approach to youth alcohol abuse, has a mandatory education course for servers, managers, and owners of premises where alcohol is consumed. Servers are taught to identify minors and to cut off adult service prior to intoxication.

Keg Labeling Laws. These laws require each beer keg to be registered and tagged so that purchasers for underage drinkers can be identified and held accountable. As of September 1993, keg registration laws had been adopted by California, Massachusetts, Nebraska, North Dakota, Virginia, Washington, and the District of Columbia.

Market Restrictions. Some violence prevention advocates have called for new restrictions on liquor industry marketing practices. They oppose the targeted marketing of fortified beers and wines to certain urban areas, particularly those with high rates of African American male unemployment. They also call for restrictions on the concentration of liquor outlets in high-crime neighborhoods. More broadly, they advocate higher taxes on alcohol and the dedication of alcohol tax revenues to alcohol abuse education and prevention programs. These approaches are resisted by manufacturers and sellers of products containing alcohol.

School and Public Education Programs. Many school and public education programs have been started in recent years to warn children of the dangers of substance abuse and to discourage experimentation, such as the "Just Say No" campaign. Some states mandate drug and alcohol abuse education in the schools. Many of these programs have not been evaluated. A comprehensive, federally funded research

review of primary alcohol abuse prevention programs concludes that there is little evidence that these programs are effective in altering behavior. This is not to imply that school and public education programs lack value, but it does suggest that they are perhaps most prudently started with strong evaluation components and used in conjunction with other strategies.

Media and Youth Violence

Studies have repeatedly confirmed the link between television violence and aggressive behavior by children. The association holds true for both short-term and long-term effects, though researchers generally agree that cofactors, including social and environmental influences, must be counted as contributing causes of criminal violence. Television in particular is a dominant force in the lives of American children because children are exposed to it in large doses. By the age of eight, most children are watching television four hours a day. Children's advocates and media reform groups have called for new limits on the content and broadcasting of television violence. Among their recommendations are the following.

- Reduce or ban the display of violence on television. This position collides with First Amendment court decisions giving producers and broadcasters wide latitude in the content of programming.
- Limit the broadcast times in which television violence can be shown to hours when children are unlikely to see it. Canada and some European nations have already created zones of protection for children during evening and weekend broadcasts, but no such prohibition on the timing of television violence has been legislated in the United States.
- Require ratings and bold warnings for programs with violent content to advise viewers before programming is aired. There has been some voluntary industry compliance with this proposal.
- Mandate educational programming to counter the violent messages carried by television. This is the approach that has been

endorsed by Congress and adopted in federal legislation.

Regulation of Television Violence. Regulation of television is in the federal domain, and Congress and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) have taken modest steps to influence television programming for children. The Children's TV Act of 1990 requires stations to air "programming specifically designed to serve the educational and informational needs of children," subject to a penalty of license revocation. Controversy over this requirement arose when broadcasters claimed that Saturday morning programs like "The Jetsons," "Super Mario Brothers," and "Leave It to Beaver" were educational in nature. This approach to compliance was challenged by advocacy groups, and in 1993, FCC delayed station license renewals in Michigan and Ohio for failure to take the educational requirement seriously.

Voluntary Compliance by the Industry. Spurred by FCC enforcement action, the television industry is voluntarily moving to upgrade the content and quality of children's educational programming. It also has made an effort to move some violent entertainment into later viewing hours preceded by warning labels. Some big advertisers, on whose support broadcasters depend, have responded to public concern by refusing to sponsor programs containing violence. The motion picture rating system is another example of voluntary action by the industry.

The Media Explosion: New Dangers Ahead.

Other media forms besides television are quickly developing. Newer video games and interactive video programs have unregulated displays of sex and violence that have prompted congressional hearings on their appropriateness for children. In the future, media "superhighways" will plug computers, telephones, televisions, and video cassette recorders into one informational network. There is no present structure to govern the contents of this technology or children's access to it.

State and Local Action. Municipalities have some opportunity to affect local television programming because they are parties to contracts

for cable television. The power to select among competing cable companies gives local government officials, and the citizens they represent, an avenue to influence the style and content of cable broadcasts. For states, the opportunity to mitigate violence on television is primarily a bully pulpit opportunity to generate industry support for positive programming and citizen concern about television violence and good viewing habits. The Maryland Campaign for Kids' Television is an example of a multiagency advocacy coalition operating statewide to educate children and parents about television violence and appropriate remedies.

Empowering Children to Succeed Without Violence: Strategies and Programs

Much of the response to youth violence has been on the program and service side. The nation has nourished a rich and diverse array of programs for children and youth at the community level. Many of these programs existed before youth violence came to dominate headlines in recent years. They include programs for the prevention of child abuse or domestic violence; substance abuse programs; programs to build education and employment skills; programs to promote child physical and mental health; and programs to divert juveniles from the justice system. The examples below were selected to illustrate general approaches to the prevention of youth violence; they represent only a small fraction of programs that serve children and youth in every state.

Conflict-Resolution Curricula and Programs

The American Psychological Association states that successful interventions must begin "as early as possible to interrupt the trajectory toward violence." One such approach teaches conflict-resolution skills to school-age children. No evaluation of these curricula has yet established their long-term effectiveness. This has not discouraged the substantial development of conflict-resolution curricula, nor has it dampened the enthusiasm of educators or community leaders for this approach.

New York's Resolving Conflicts Creatively program operates in 180 elementary and secondary schools serving 70,000 children in New York City. A classroom curriculum,

based on Quaker principles of nonviolence, instructs students and teachers on how to resolve conflicts without aggression. Among other things, children are taught to explore and verbalize their feelings before lashing out in a confrontational way. Short-term evaluation of the curriculum found that students reported fewer fights and a greater willingness and ability to resolve disputes without aggression. There is a student conflict mediation component with specially trained student mediators; each school with a mediation program has successfully resolved an average of 100 student conflicts per year. Resolving Conflicts Creatively has been replicated at pilot sites in four other states—Alaska, California, Louisiana, and New Jersey.

Mentoring and Esteem-Building Programs

Many children lack positive role models because their father is absent, one or both of their parents are incarcerated, or their parents do not set strong examples. Mentoring programs pair high-risk youth with adult role models in an effort to create a positive social bond and build personal self-esteem.

Men of Distinction of Nashville, Tennessee, is a violence prevention program for African American males ages nine to seventeen run by the Bethlehem Youth Center in Nashville. The program started as a demonstration project to reduce homicide among African American males, which is a "major health problem" in Tennessee according to a Task Force on Black Health Care. The chief strategy is a mentoring program, where youth are matched with an adult from the community who acts as a friend, guide, and role model. In addition, trained high school and college students provide peer counseling to program participants. Cultural and self-esteem training help redefine manhood in a nonviolent way. Men of Distinction also sponsors sports events, martial arts training, dance lessons, and other recreational activities. The program was cited as a model by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in 1992.

Family Preservation and Parent Training

Controlled studies have repeatedly confirmed that a history of child abuse or neglect is a

substantial risk factor for subsequent violent behavior. The proportion of children below age eighteen living with two parents in the United States has declined significantly since 1970 as reports of child abuse and neglect have skyrocketed beyond the ability of state child welfare systems to respond. When the child welfare system does respond, the child may be placed in foster care for long periods, often in multiple homes. This not only increases the cost to the state, but the lack of a permanent home also puts the child at even greater risk of future criminality. Many private and community-based programs have produced parent training models to help single mothers cope with stress and raise healthy babies. Other programs have focused on the need to prevent the unnecessary out-of-home placement of children.

Washington's Homebuilders program provides short-term, intensive in-home family therapy to prevent the placement of children in foster care. Referrals are made by child welfare and juvenile justice agencies and are limited to children in imminent danger of out-of-home placement because of neglect, abuse, or other problems. Therapists have a maximum caseload of two families, remain on twenty-four-hour call, and devote eight to ten hours a day to families in crisis. Their mission is to teach family members how to deal with stress, substance abuse, sexual or physical abuse, shortage of money, and other problems. With a four- to six-week average intervention, Homebuilders is able to prevent out-of-home placement in more than three-fourths of the cases accepted. The average total cost per family is about \$3,000, a huge savings when compared with the cost of placing a single child in foster care—estimated at between \$8,000 and \$12,000 per child. Homebuilders operates under contract with the state of Washington at multiple county sites. This model has been replicated in approximately thirty states.

Skill Building for Competence in Education and Employment. Many programs with crime and violence prevention goals use skill-building strategies to improve participants' prospects for employment and success. For the most part,

the impact of these programs on violence prevention has not been documented by long-term evaluation. Nevertheless, they draw enthusiastic support from youth service advocates whose experience tells them that a youth with an education and a job is at lower criminal risk than a dropout with no legal sources of income.

The YouthBuild program serves three goals at once: the development of leadership and other skills among high-risk youth, the creation of affordable housing, and the reduction of homelessness. The program developed from the Youth Action Program in East Harlem, New York, and has now been replicated in fifteen cities in ten states—California, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.

School dropouts ages sixteen to twenty-one are recruited and trained in building construction. Their skills are then applied in rehabilitating housing for poor and homeless people.

The young people who join the program share many of the risk factors that may predispose them to violence; all have quit school and many have been in gangs or youth prisons. The training incorporates discipline, teamwork, and leadership skills with construction skills. Youth in the program have significant decisionmaking power. They sit on policy committees that hire and fire staff. They also participate in community service and advocacy projects. Many go on to apprenticeships and jobs arranged while they were in the program. Through its own national advocacy coalition, YouthBuild convinced Congress to create a \$40 million competitive grant program within the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to replicate YouthBuild projects throughout the United States. HUD will consider funding applications for about thirty such programs in 1994.

Gang Alternative Programs. The dynamics of gang violence are complex. The National Research Council describes gangs as outgrowths and reflections of the local cultures in which they flourish; most are found in areas of poverty, physical deterioration, and

"today you deal with gang violence. You worry that you might get hurt just for wearing the wrong colors. Sometimes people come and put a gun to your head just because they want your jacket or something. You never know! I worry about that and lots of things like that."

institutional breakdown where racial and ethnic minorities tend to be concentrated. Socialization into violence begins early in life in these areas. The violence practiced through youth gangs may express ethnic hatred, economic motivation, a cultural rite of passage into manhood, or simple revenge. Many gangs are highly organized and fully operational within the prison system; the leadership is not always youthful and may consist of men ages thirty to fifty.

Until recently, in Los Angeles County gang proliferation has been accompanied by rising levels of violence, including drive-by shootings and homicides. Community Youth Gang Services in Los Angeles estimates that there are 1,000 gangs in the county with 150,000 members. Gang growth in Los Angeles does not appear to have been deterred by 1989 California legislation making "active participation in a criminal street gang" a felony. In 1992 in Los Angeles County, police and sheriff agencies counted 803 gang-related homicides. This number is expected to drop after a truce among gangs that grew weary of the bloodshed. The truce may not last; already there are signs of restlessness. And new developments, such as the rise of skinhead and white supremacy gangs, are troubling.

Los Angeles's Community Youth Gang Services (CYGS) works on several fronts to discourage gang membership and gang violence. Outreach workers intervene directly to mediate gang disputes before they flash into violence; they are now trying to maintain the peace treaties concluded more than a year ago. Diverting kids from gangs is another goal, and in many cases this may mean focusing on six- or seven-year-old children. CYGS sponsors sports programs and, with the Los Angeles Unified School District, a curriculum for students in grades four through six to promote self-esteem without gang membership. A parent education component teaches parents how to face and deal with their children's membership in gangs. Departures from gangs, which are not always easy, are facilitated by safe haven options, job connections, and other

inducements. A graffiti removal program serves two purposes: removal of urban blight and disruption of gang-to-gang communications that involve death threats. CYGS is funded directly by the city of Los Angeles, the Los Angeles Unified School District, and the state's Office of Criminal Justice Planning.

Youth Service Corps Programs. In the late 1970s and 1980s, several states established conservation corps, putting young men and women to work on environmental cleanup and restoration. The prototype was the California Conservation Corps, which reincarnated the U.S. Civilian Conservation Corps of the Great Depression as a state program with the intriguing recruitment motto, "hard work, low pay, miserable conditions." This effort spread slowly and was given federal impetus in 1990 with the passage of the National and Community Service Act. Promoted by the Clinton administration, in 1993 Congress took this concept a step further by enacting a youth service plan designed to enroll 100,000 youth in full-time service by 1996. Although violence prevention is not the central goal, these programs supply an alternative for dropouts and other high-risk youth by providing participants with work experience, skills training, leadership development, academic support, and the opportunity to serve their communities.

The National Community Service Trust Act of 1993 authorizes \$1.5 billion through fiscal 1996 for state and local youth service corps programs (AmeriCorps). Two-thirds of these funds will go to the states as formula or competitive grants. Through state youth service commissions, states will disburse funds to eligible programs in four priority areas: public safety, education, human needs, and the environment. According to Attorney General Janet Reno, a former board member of the Greater Miami Youth Corps, eligible programs will include community policing, victim assistance, offender rehabilitation, and community crime prevention efforts. Half of the state funds must go to programs in locations that are economically or ecologically distressed.

These programs will employ young men and women above age seventeen to work on community projects. AmeriCorps workers can stay in the corps for two years; they are paid at a rate just below the minimum wage, get health care and child care, can earn a high school equivalency diploma, and can earn an education award to offset the costs of additional education or to pay off student loans.

YOUTH FORCE, the Salt Lake County Service and Conservation Corps in Utah, has been effective in helping the community understand the complex nature of youth violence by offering an alternative to gang members and forming community problemsolving teams. With joint funding from the Job Training Partnership Act, the Community Development Block grant, and the county, three pilot programs were initiated in June 1993. The program currently serves about fifty participants and is active in each of the four Salt Lake County school districts, including an alternative high school. To date, corps members have renovated two Head Start centers in Salt Lake City, constructed a park from the design phase through completion, and constructed a 1.5-mile stretch of a trail along the Jordan River. Current activities include creation of a mural in a multiracial school involving competing gang members, redesign of city parks to reduce crime problems, development of a community gardening program and, in conjunction with Youth Corrections, Juvenile Court, and local school districts, development of a highly supervised mentoring and tutoring program for elementary school children.

Creating Safe Schools

School violence is a major public concern. The appearance of guns on campus has added a frightening new dimension to the school safety issue. An Illinois survey of thirty-one schools in 1990 disclosed that one in twenty students had carried a gun to school sometime during that year. According to a 1991 Department of Justice survey of 758 students at ten inner-city schools in four states, 45 percent said they had been threatened by a firearm or shot at on the

way to school. Other weapons, such as knives and baseball bats, have been confiscated after student fights and teacher assaults.

Tough new laws are being enacted by states imposing new penalties for weapons possession on or near school grounds. These new laws include the following:

- Gun-free school zone laws, modeled on the federal Gun-Free School Zone Act of 1990 that prohibits the possession or discharge of a firearm at or within 1,000 feet of a public or private school.
- Drug-free school zone laws, which impose criminal sanctions for dealing drugs at or near a school. Minnesota has extended the zone to cover parks, housing projects, and school buses.
- Automatic suspension/expulsion laws for students caught with firearms or other weapons. In 1993 California provided for automatic suspension leading to expulsion for students carrying guns on school grounds or to off-campus school activities, with backup provisions permitting education to continue in another setting.

Other school violence prevention strategies include:

- safe passage plans to provide protection to students going to and from school, and safe haven projects establishing protected areas for youth activities;
- anonymous tip lines so students can report other students carrying weapons without fear of recrimination;
- school dress codes prohibiting gang colors or styles;
- detection and search strategies such as metal detectors, security guards, and unannounced searches of students and their lockers; and
- recreation and after-school programs.

Some communities and school districts have reopened after-school programs that were abandoned because of revenue shortages. In these cases, letting kids back into the school yard to

"Sexual abuse—I know we can't put our names on this paper, but sexual abuse is scary, it happened to me when I was 9 years old and I was afraid to tell anyone!! It finally stopped when my family moved to Ohio. I was 13 years old. For four years I was sexually abused by my grandfather and that is the memories I have from my childhood."

play basketball is viewed as a simple and positive alternative to idleness, gangs, or crime.

Creating Safe Communities

Every violence prevention model researched for this summary recommends community action to address the multiple risk factors contributing to youth violence. Some crime-fighting organizations such as the National Crime Prevention Council have promulgated models of community action. Local and community involvement in planning and operations is critical to success, with states playing a supportive and facilitative role.

Community Policing. Community policing is a restatement of the law enforcement mission, stressing the need to be proactive and to help communities solve crime-related problems. In community policing, the police and citizens become partners in the effort to create safe neighborhoods. Rather than simply responding to after-the-fact calls, police officers maintain a visible presence in the community, helping resolve disputes before violence occurs and equipping citizens with the knowledge and skills they need to prevent crime. Some specific community policing strategies are:

- more foot patrols to put police in direct contact with citizens;
- decentralized police operations (e.g., community storefront offices) to improve familiarity and relationships with people in the neighborhood; and
- education and outreach projects involving community groups—such as churches, residential associations and youth service providers—so all participate in community crime prevention.

Each community policing program has its own emphasis, depending on local priorities. Some have directly targeted youth violence. One of these is the Community Oriented Policing (COPS) program in Prince George's County, Maryland. This is one of eight "Innovative Neighborhood Oriented Policing" demonstration projects funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance to test rural, suburban, and urban community policing strategies. The

COPS program has wide support from community agencies and leaders and claims to have been effective in reducing crime in the community. It presently serves about 400 high-risk youth ages seven to eighteen, with active participation from adult volunteers. Program components include the following.

- A gang project, cosponsored with the Montgomery County School District and local churches, to raise awareness about growing gang activity in the area.
- A mentoring component that brings COPS officers, adult volunteers, and school children together to discuss drugs, crime, and other problems.
- A sports program that cosponsors midnight basketball games on Friday and Saturday nights for youth, as well as softball, football, basketball, and martial arts activities.

Comprehensive Community Violence Prevention Projects. Some municipalities and communities are highly organized around the youth violence prevention issue. Some examples follow.

Begun in 1986, the Boston Violence Prevention Project combines education and health-based strategies in a communitywide effort to reduce adolescent assaults, injuries, and homicides. A centerpiece of this Boston, Massachusetts, project is a violence prevention curriculum for elementary teachers and students. Developed by Deborah Prothrow-Stith, M.D., of Harvard's School of Public Health, the curriculum teaches children how to communicate, develop mutual respect, and resolve conflicts without aggression or violence. The project takes the conflict-resolution training beyond the schools and into the streets, focusing on sites with violent histories. Educators and project workers try to saturate high-risk neighborhoods with conflict-resolution and violence prevention training, involving churches, multiservice centers, detention facilities, housing developments, and other community groups. At Boston City Hospital, project staff recruit high-risk youth, including those wounded in violent episodes, to work in a violence prevention clinic. A media component produces advertisements and television

public service announcements with antiviolence themes. Recently, the project has evolved into a citywide effort with funding from the city of Boston. A thorough process evaluation has been conducted with favorable results; long-term effects on violence reduction are still under review.

The Cleveland Task Force on Violent Crime, a nonprofit group, was formed in 1981 with the goal of reducing crime in the Cleveland, Ohio, area. It supports local programs serving four priorities: reducing violence, educating youth, preventing substance abuse, and building coalitions to stop crime. Interventions occur in schools, public housing projects, and high-risk neighborhoods. First-through sixth-grade school children are recruited to Young Gentleman's Clubs as an alternative to gang membership; in these clubs, children become role models for one another. For example, someone who starts a fight in the cafeteria is made cafeteria monitor, with the responsibility for keeping peace among his peers. The clubs also provide group and individual counseling and home visits. A media and public education component fights crime with billboards, bus placards, and broadcasting spots. The task force also sponsors substance abuse training, an antigang program, community policing activities, neighborhood watch groups, and graffiti cleanup projects.

The Texas Cities Action Plan is an ambitious multicounty crime prevention effort that began when a group of Texas mayors agreed to unite in the fight against crime. Seven cities (Arlington, Austin, Corpus Christi, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, and San Antonio) are now implementing community action plans based on models developed by the National Crime Prevention Council, which continues to assist Texas Cities Action Plan (TCAP) cities under a grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The action plans vary from city to city, but they share a common emphasis on the development of grassroots, crime-fighting coalitions of leaders, public agencies, business and community groups, and citizens. The Houston program is wholly focused on youth crime pre-

vention. Corpus Christi's plan calls for a youth sports network, on-campus support groups, "kids clubs" for substance abuse education, and improvements in school campus security.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is now addressing the need for better evaluation of youth violence prevention strategies with demonstration grants supporting community crime prevention action/evaluation projects at three sites. Multifaceted prevention programs in New York (Brooklyn), North Carolina (Durham), and Texas (Houston) will receive process and outcome evaluations over five years, producing what CDC hopes will be more knowledge about the efficacy of these prevention efforts.

Justice System Models for Serious and Violent Juvenile Offenders

Incarceration is the primary strategy applied by the criminal justice system to manage and prevent violent crime. Yet, incarceration has only limited value as a deterrent to the commission of violent crimes outside prison walls. A number of respected researchers have documented the inability of longer terms of incarceration to reduce violent crime rates across the nation. Nevertheless, most states have responded to public concern about youth violence with criminal justice sanctions, such as lowering the age of adult court jurisdiction, sentencing more juveniles to prison terms, and extending terms of confinement in juvenile facilities.

Can youth violence be prevented by trying more minors as adults and incarcerating them for longer terms, perhaps in state prisons? The evidence so far is discouraging. Outcome studies in states that have lowered the adult court jurisdictional ages show little or no effect on the juvenile crime rate. The national tripling of average prison time per violent crime since 1975 has not been accompanied by a decline in violent crime rates. After a review of available research, the National Research Council's Panel on the Understanding and Control of Violent Behavior has concluded that longer prison terms have a negligible effect on the overall level of violence

"It's wrong, violence that is. I hate hurting people but sometimes it's necessary to live. My dad has been in prison for 3 years for raping and beating my mother, sister and me. He was sick-minded and violent. Therefore, I hate violence. I wish it would just stop."

in society, and that "preventive strategies may be as important as criminal justice responses to violence."

Even when serious juvenile offenders are committed to youth institutions such as state training schools, the experience of incarceration may not prevent the recycling of juvenile offenders through the criminal justice system. When measured by rearrests within two to three years of release, recidivism rates approach 90 percent. These results reinforce claims that some youth correctional institutions are "gladiator schools" for crime.

Population pressures, rising crime rates, and longer prison sentences will swell the populations of juvenile institutions in future years and escalate state costs for the construction and operation of these facilities. Faced with this prospect, some policymakers have searched for safe and cost-effective alternatives to incarceration. Whole-state models of alternative custody and treatment for juveniles have been implemented in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Utah and, to a lesser degree, in other states. In these states, large, prison-like youth institutions were closed in favor of community-based treatment systems operated under contracts with private providers. A comprehensive evaluation of the Massachusetts community care system, conducted by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, concluded that the system was effective in reducing the frequency and severity of followup offenses and that it operated at a cost savings compared with institution-based systems. Nevertheless, only a few states have borrowed from the Massachusetts model.

Alternative-to-institution programs for serious and violent juvenile offenders vary with respect to the caseloads they serve and the approaches they employ. They include boot camps, wilderness programs, juvenile sex-offender treatment programs, full-time psychiatric facilities, and small residential programs. Described below are two types of programs that offer alternatives to institutions for juvenile offenders: bootcamps and small residential treatment programs.

Bootcamps. By definition, bootcamps are not for violent offenders. In fact, eligibility for most bootcamps is limited to nonviolent offenders, drug offenders, and/or first-time offenders. Bootcamps are included in this discussion because they hold promise as an alternative that may discourage high-risk youth from future violent conduct and because the federal government is preparing a massive injection of funds to states for new bootcamp programs.

All bootcamps share a military style. Drill instructors bark instructions at "cadets," sometimes using insults to command performance of calisthenics or labor. This regimen may be combined with education and treatment, usually for substance abuse. Over a short stay (e.g., three to six months), the goal of these "shock incarceration" programs is to instill discipline and responsibility as well as hard-time accountability.

There are currently forty-six bootcamps for adults in thirty states; thirteen of these programs accept women. There are eighteen bootcamps for juvenile offenders in the United States. Three are demonstration projects funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in Alabama (Mobile), Colorado (Denver), and Ohio (Cuyahoga County); they are still being evaluated.

The National Guard Bureau is sponsoring ten Civilian Youth Opportunities "Challenge" programs in Arizona, Arkansas, Connecticut, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, New York, Oklahoma, and West Virginia. These programs are five-month residential programs with one-year postresidential mentoring. Participants must be between the ages of sixteen and eighteen, high school dropouts, drug free, and not involved with the legal system. The program includes education, citizenship, life-coping skills, job training and job placement, personal development, work and personal values, community living, health, and physical training.

Bootcamps are popular because they merge the public demand for accountability with the rehabilitative interest in treatment and shorter custody time. But are bootcamps effective as an antidote to crime? The most detailed studies

show that bootcamp graduates recidivate at about the same rate as do mainstream prison inmates. However, evaluations of bootcamps generally are unsatisfactory because few are done with strict or standardized methodology. Bootcamps now being funded by state and federal agencies may require more elaborate followup data to help build knowledge about their efficacy. Meanwhile, from a cost perspective, bootcamps are potentially effective because, despite high startup costs, savings can be achieved in state corrections budgets through shorter average lengths of stay.

Some bootcamps have failed. For example, the bootcamp run by the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department had empty beds and closed when inmates realized they could be released from overcrowded jails as quickly as they could graduate from hard time in a bootcamp. High dropout rates are chronic in some programs. Program success may depend on a guarantee of a shorter sentence as the quid pro quo for the physical and mental demands of the program. Moderation in the use of personally degrading tactics also may be necessary for success; it is notable that the modern bootcamps run by armed services organizations have significantly reduced or eliminated personal humiliation because this tactic was found to lower recruits' self-esteem.

Among the promising state-sponsored bootcamp programs is California's Juvenile Bootcamp, the LEAD program. In 1992 California established juvenile bootcamps at two sites within the institutions of its Youth Authority. These LEAD ("Leadership, Esteem, Ability, and Discipline") programs put qualified youth through tough physical drills supplemented by education and substance abuse counseling. Drill instructors are trained by the National Guard under a grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance. An incentive for youth to succeed is the four-month term of the program; the alternative is a mainstream sentence lasting more than a year. An enriched parole component is designed to help bootcamp graduates find jobs and succeed upon their return to the community. The enabling legislation keeps the focus on training, teamwork, and skill

enhancement. Measures of the program's success to date are the very low attrition rate and the high graduation rate. Moreover, the LEAD quarters are reported to be the safest in the institution, with fewer fights and little or no gang infiltration. A long-term evaluation, including recidivism rates, is built into the program design.

Small Residential Treatment Programs. Handcuffs, physical restraints, and chemical weapons found in many state training schools will not be seen at the facilities of Pennsylvania's Alternative Rehabilitation Communities (ARC), even though the program takes some of the state's most serious and violent young offenders. ARC is a nonprofit organization that operates community-based facilities for juvenile offenders under agreement with state and county government. Serious offenders spend their first nine to twelve months in a secure, fourteen-bed residential facility at Chambersburg, where they are controlled by a tight program structure, highly trained staff, and strong peer influences. As they improve, these youth are moved to gradually diminishing levels of restriction: from full-time residence in a nonsecure, twelve-bed facility, to weekends at home, and finally to weekdays at home. One of the features making it possible to succeed with these tough adolescents is that "the kids feel safe in the program," where fights, gangs, and Mace are not present. ARC staff work closely with family, school, and potential employers to support the juvenile's return to the community. The most recently available evaluation of ARC showed good results, with recidivism rates in the range of 30 percent to 35 percent. The cost per day in the residential program is higher than that of a conventional institution, but because of the program's high success rate, economic benefits ultimately may accrue through the avoidance of reconfinement.

What Can States Do?

With violence by and against juveniles escalating at a disturbing rate, Governors are adopting long-term strategies that focus on the prevention of youth violence by providing

"As a victim of physical abuse, sexual abuse and emotional abuse, many adults don't understand the situation I have been put in. They think it is a fault in our generation which is not true because it their generation which commits these crimes. Parents often try to do their best by getting involved but that doesn't necessarily change the way we feel. Being lonely doesn't go away over night. Violence is a learned trait. I just hope someday that we won't be teaching our kids to hurt others."

more comprehensive services for children and their families. About thirty states are experimenting with a variety of approaches to enhance parents' ability to care for their children, including investing in early intervention programs for young children, implementing family support and family preservation programs, and expanding public preschool programs. Among the states engaged in reforming their service delivery systems for children are Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Washington, and West Virginia.

Governors also are taking immediate action to combat violence among young people with tighter gun control measures, tougher sentencing for violent and repeat juvenile offenders, alternative sentencing and rehabilitation for nonviolent offenders, and reforms to outdated and overburdened state juvenile justice systems. In addition to the programs described earlier, state initiatives include the following.

Arizona Governor Fife Symington is asking the legislature to amend state statutes in order to automatically remand violent and chronic juvenile offenders to adult court. Washington Governor Mike Lowry is recommending that individuals sixteen years of age or older who commit serious, violent offenses or who have committed prior violent felonies be tried as adults as part of his Youth Agenda—a \$13 million package to eradicate youth violence. New York Governor Mario M. Cuomo also has proposed the expansion of the state's juvenile offender category so children who possess or use a loaded gun or attempt to commit a violent crime are subject to prosecution as adults. In Utah the prosecutor can directly file cases in adult court when a juvenile is charged with a second felony offense involving a handgun.

In addition to banning handgun possession by minors, Colorado has created a new Juvenile Offender System in which youths convicted of

violent crimes are treated as adults. They face a possible five-year sentence in a special facility that is part of the state's adult prison system, rather than the maximum two-year sentence in a juvenile facility as mandated for other juveniles. South Carolina Governor Carroll A. Campbell Jr. also has called for reform of the state's juvenile justice system to ensure that nonviolent youth offenders are not jailed with violent offenders.

Florida has recently approved new laws allowing police to seize guns from minors and to charge them with first-degree misdemeanors, punishable by community service and the suspension of driving privileges. The new laws also strengthen the penalties for adults who illegally provide minors with firearms, especially dealers who sell weapons to juveniles. Florida Governor Lawton Chiles will introduce a more comprehensive juvenile justice package in the 1994 regular session. Governor Lowry and Nebraska Governor E. Benjamin Nelson will also introduce legislation to ban juvenile firearm possession in the upcoming legislative session.

Illinois and Virginia have established prevention councils. In Illinois the Council for the Prevention of Violence is responsible for funding and implementing the state's legislative directive to establish violence prevention curricula in all Illinois classrooms. The Partnership for the Prevention of Youth Violence, housed in Virginia's Department of Mental Health, is a forum for public and private agencies to address youth violence issues, particularly as they relate to rural, suburban, and urban needs.

After-school programs and summer youth development programs are among the strategies identified by a commission established by Governor Cuomo to prevent violence. New York also has created "wilderness camps" for youth offenders to promote self-esteem, self-discipline, and community involvement while engaging them in outdoor and wilderness experiences.

Although state approaches to youth violence are still in their infancy, there is a growing recognition of the linkages among family

stability, quality educational experiences in safe schools, community development, long-term economic opportunities, and violence. Governors can enhance these efforts by taking the following actions.

- Establish violence prevention goals.
- Continue state investment in prevention and early intervention services for young children and their families and expand these efforts to include strategies to help children learn how to reduce aggressive behavior. Special efforts should be made to identify families at high risk of violence (e.g., those with young single mothers, substance abuse problems, or histories of domestic violence or child abuse and neglect).
- Ensure that education reform initiatives include strategies for reducing violence, including conflict-resolution programs; teacher training in identifying and making referrals to appropriate services for students who exhibit emotional and behavioral problems; self-esteem building programs; after-school programs; and school recreational activities.
- Continue to adopt strategies to reduce youth access to and possession of guns, including incentives to encourage children to report weapons in school.
- Convene forums and town hall meetings to help the public understand the complexities of the problem and the relationship between youth violence and positive early childhood experiences and quality education.
- Expand the mission of existing interagency councils to address youth violence.
- Develop baseline data about the extent of the youth violence problem on a statewide, county, and community basis.

Program Contacts

California, Community Youth Gang Services, Bill Martinez, (213) 266-4264

California, LEAD (Leadership, Esteem, Ability, and Discipline) program, Si Mariano, (916) 262-1540.

Florida, Dade County Gun Safety Awareness Program, William Harris, (305) 995-1986

Georgia, Centers for Disease Control Community Crime Prevention Action/Evaluation Projects, Jim Mercy, (404) 488-4646

Maryland, Community Oriented Policing, Corporal Tony Avendorph, (301) 336-2375

Massachusetts, YouthBuild, Dorothy Stoneman or John Bell, (617) 623-9900

Massachusetts, Boston Violence Prevention Project, Linda Hudson, (617) 534-5196

New York, Resolving Conflicts Creatively, Sheila Alson, (212) 260-6290

Ohio, Cleveland Task Force on Violent Crime, Michael Walker, (216) 781-2944

Pennsylvania, Alternative Rehabilitation Communities, Dan Elby, (717) 238-7101

Tennessee, Men of Distinction, Ron King, (615) 329-3386

Texas, Texas Cities Action Plan, Terry Modglin, (202) 466-6272

U.S. Corporation for National Service, (202) 606-5000

Washington, Homebuilders, Mary Fischer, (206) 927-1550

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About the Authors

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Terence P. Thornberry is a professor and former dean of the School of Criminal Justice at the University of Albany. Prior to joining the faculty, he was director of the Research Program in Crime and Delinquency at the University of Georgia and associate director of the Center for Studies in Criminology and Criminal Law at the University of Pennsylvania.

Thornberry holds a master's degree in criminology and a doctorate in sociology from the University of Pennsylvania. He has authored a number of books, including *The Criminally Insane*, which received the American Bar Association's Gavel Award Certificate of Merit, and *From Boy to Man—From Delinquency to Crime*, and many book chapters and articles. He currently is the director of the Rochester Youth Development Study, an ongoing panel study examining the causes and correlates of serious delinquency and drug use.

Donna Maria Garnett is the executive director of the Center for Health Ethics, Policy, and Human Investment at the University of Colorado at Denver's Graduate School of Public Affairs. She served as an advisor to Colorado Governor Roy Romer for four years and was the deputy director of his Office of Policy and Initiatives from August 1991 to July 1993. Her responsibilities as deputy director included oversight of the education and human services policy areas and management of multiple initiatives on education, child and family services, early childhood education, and human services. Garnett was chair of the Staff Advisory Council to the Committee on Education during the Governor's term as chair of the National Governors' Association. She is recognized as a national expert on family policy and on the integration of education, health, and human services. She has spearheaded

strategic planning projects, including Colorado's Strategic Plan for Families and Children At Risk. In her current position, she has consulted with several states to design human services, mental health, and education policies and service delivery systems that meet the comprehensive needs of children, youth, and families.

David Steinhart is a California attorney and consultant on child, youth, and family issues. From 1986 to 1992, he was director of policy development for the National Council on Crime and Delinquency. Prior to that time, he served as executive director of the California Child, Youth, and Family Coalition. A respected advocate of alternative-to-institution programs for children and youth, Steinhart was the principal draftsman of landmark juvenile justice legislation in California to remove children from adult jails and lockups. He is the author of numerous articles and books on children and youth issues, including *Why Punish the Children?—A Reappraisal of the Children of Incarcerated Mothers in America*.

Selected Resources

Violence and Youth: Psychology's Response, Volume 1: Summary Report of the APA Commission on Violence and Youth

American Psychological Association

This report brings the findings of past and current research to bear on the national problem of youth violence. It concludes that violence involving youth is not random, uncontrollable, or inevitable. It emphasizes that multiple factors, both individual and social, contribute to an individual's propensity to use violence, and that many of these factors are within society's power to change. Early childhood interventions directed toward parents, child care providers, and health care providers can lay the groundwork for preventing violence. Intervening promptly with children who begin to show aggressive behavior will also stop the escalation of violence.

Other recommendations for curbing youth violence outlined in the report include implementing school-based interventions; limiting access to firearms by children and youth; reducing youth involvement with alcohol and other drugs; providing education programs to reduce prejudice and hostility; developing the potential of the mass media to be part of the solution; and providing psychological health services for young perpetrators, victims, and witnesses of violence. A promising area suggested for future intervention efforts is identifying and strengthening the protective elements that keep most youth from turning to violence in the face of adverse social conditions.

American Psychological Association, Public Interest Directorate, 750 First Street NE, Washington, D.C. 20002-4242; (202) 336-6046. (1993, 96 pages; free)

The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher 1993, Violence in America's Public Schools

Louis Harris and Associates, Inc.

This report examines issues related to violence in public schools based on the perceptions and experiences of teachers, students, and law enforcement officials. The report finds that a majority of public school teachers and students feel safe and have not been personally involved in a violent incident in or around their schools. Yet teacher and student experiences and perceptions frequently differ, with students seeing and fearing violence more than do teachers. Law enforcement officials express the highest levels of concern about violence in their local public schools. Teacher and student experiences with safety and violence in schools show strong associations with factors related to the school environment, including the quality of education a school provides, a school's ability to help students succeed academically, the level of parental involvement in school life, and the percentage of low-income or minority students in a school.

Metropolitan Life, 1 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10010-3690; (212) 578-4587. (1993, 154 pages; free)

The Prevention of Youth Violence: A Framework for Community Action

National Center for Injury Prevention and Control

This manual is designed to help concerned individuals and community-based organizations take action to reduce violence and prevent injuries and death from violence among youth in their community. It addresses violence prevention strategies in the areas of education, statutory or regulatory change, and environmental modification, and profiles existing

community programs that use these strategies. A section on program management describes the processes of organizing the community, gathering and analyzing the information needed to describe the problem of youth violence in the community, setting program goals and objectives, locating resources, and monitoring the progress of a community program.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Violence Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Mail Stop K-60, 4770 Buford Highway NE, Atlanta, Georgia 30341-3724; (404) 488-4646. (1993, 95 pages; free)

Understanding and Preventing Violence

National Research Council, Panel on the Understanding and Control of Violent Behavior

In this report a panel of the National Research Council's Committee on Law and Justice reviews what is known about violence in the United States, what research is needed to understand the causes of violent behavior, and what interventions may contribute to the control of violence. The report finds that though the average prison time served per violent crime nearly tripled between 1975 and 1989, the violent crime rate did not decline. It concludes that preventive strategies are as important as incarceration in controlling violence, and that no single strategy will succeed in preventing all types of violence. The report recommends that a wide variety of preventive interventions be rigorously tested to improve the understanding and control of violent behavior.

The report also recommends additional research exploring the developmental, psychosocial, social, and demographic factors involved in violent behavior, as well as biomedical research to explore the physiological processes that underlie violent acts. It notes that support for violence research is well below that accorded other threats to life and suggests the need for increased federal support for violence research and intervention.

National Academy Press, 2101 Constitution Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20418-0001; (202) 334-3313 or (800) 624-6242. (1993, 464 pages; \$49.95 prepaid plus \$4.00 shipping for the first copy, \$.50 shipping for each additional copy)

A Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

This publication reviews current statistics, research findings, and program evaluations relevant to juvenile delinquency. It also presents a comprehensive strategy for dealing with serious, violent, and chronic juvenile offenders. The proposed strategy incorporates two principal components: preventing youth from becoming delinquent by focusing prevention programs on at-risk youth and improving the response of the juvenile justice system to delinquent offenders through a system of graduated sanctions and a continuum of treatment alternatives. Five key principles for preventing and reducing juvenile delinquency guide the strategy: strengthening the family; supporting core social institutions such as schools, religious institutions, and community organizations; promoting delinquency prevention as the most cost-effective approach to dealing with juvenile delinquency; intervening immediately and effectively when delinquent behavior occurs; and identifying and controlling the small group of serious, violent, and chronic juvenile offenders.

Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse, Box 6000, Rockville, Maryland 20850; (301) 251-5194 or (800) 638-8736. (October 1993, 46 pages; free)

Caring for Infants and Toddlers in Violent Environments: Hurt, Healing, and Hope

Zero to Three/National Center for Clinical Infant Programs

Joy D. Osofsky and Emily Fenichel, editors

A product of Zero to Three's Study Group on Violence, this publication looks at the effects of violence on very young children, their families, and practitioners. It reviews what is

known about the impact of early experiences of violence on development, suggests ways to help children and adults cope successfully with these experiences, and describes ways in which community institutions can become safe havens for very young children and their caregivers. The stories of individual families whose infants and young children have been affected by violence are included. The publication concludes with a call for violence prevention and intervention on behalf of very young children, including a family-centered approach to addressing violence, a campaign to change national attitudes toward violence, and informed and comprehensive public policy at all levels of government designed to reduce and prevent violence.

Zero to Three Study Group on Violence, National Center for Clinical Infant Programs, 2000 14th Street North, Suite 380, Arlington, Virginia 22201-2500; (703) 528-5300. (1994, 48pages; \$4.95 plus \$2.50 shipping and handling)

Additional Resources

American Bar Association
1800 M Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 331-2200

Through its various committees, the American Bar Association provides information, research, and technical assistance on a wide variety of issues, including substance abuse, crime and violence prevention, and children's needs.

American Youth Work Center
1751 N Street NW, Suite 302
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 785-0764

The American Youth Work Center assists community-based youth service programs, including delinquency treatment and prevention programs, through training, seminars, technical assistance, conferences, legislative information, and research.

The Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence
Institute of Behavioral Science
Campus Box 442, Building 9
University of Colorado
Boulder, Colorado 80309-0442
(303) 492-1032

The Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence is an academic research group that offers information, research, and a technical assistance center for evaluating violence prevention programs. Special emphasis is placed on adolescent violence.

Federal Interdepartmental Working Group on Violence
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, D.C. 20201
(202) 690-8157

Formed by the Clinton Administration to develop a comprehensive, governmentwide plan to reduce violence, the Federal Interdepartmental Working Group on Violence is led by the Departments of Health and Human Services and Justice, with participation by the Departments of Education, Labor, Housing and Urban Development, and Agriculture and the Office of National Drug Control Policy. Youth violence is one of several priority issues.

National Crime Prevention Council
1700 K Street NW, Second Floor
Washington, D.C. 20006-3817
(202) 466-6272

The National Crime Prevention Council offers a wide range of assistance in community crime and drug abuse prevention, including educational materials, comprehensive listings of local crime prevention programs, demonstration programs for effective prevention strategies, and training and technical assistance to policymakers, practitioners, community groups, churches, schools, and youth groups. Available programs include Youth as Resources and Teens, Crime, and the Community.

National School Safety Center
4165 Thousand Oaks Boulevard, Suite 290
Westlake Village, California 91362
(805) 373-9977

Sponsored federally by the Departments of Justice and Education, the National School Safety Center focuses on crime prevention in schools throughout the country. Special emphasis is placed on efforts to rid schools of crime, violence, and drugs and on programs to improve student discipline, attendance, and achievement and the school environment. The center provides technical assistance and training programs.

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National Urban League, Inc.
Stop the Violence Clearinghouse
500 East 62nd Street
New York, New York 10021
(212) 310-9000

The National Urban League collects, evaluates, and supports research, curricula, model programs, training, and techniques that provide effective violence and crime prevention services to African American youth, families, and communities. The national organization works with Urban League affiliates and other interested community-based organizations through demonstration grants, technical assistance, and training seminars.